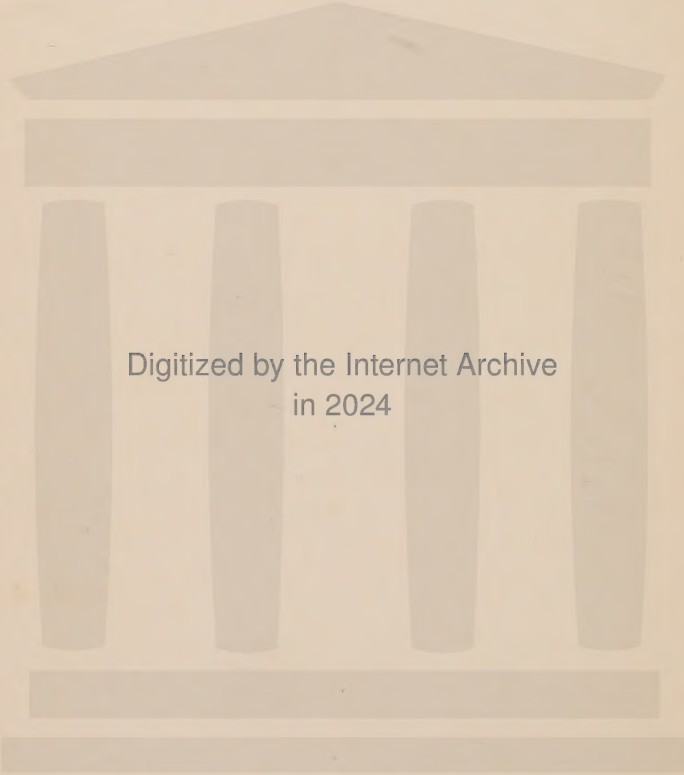




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Rev. Lawrence, O.S.B.

A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction

A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction

EDITED BY

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Volume I

PREFACE—CONTENTS—HOMILETIC ADAPTATION—
INTRODUCTION

THE CREED

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PREFACE

IN the memorable Encyclical *Acerbo nimis* of April 15, 1905, on the teaching of Christian Doctrine, there are two paragraphs of special importance :—

“Adults no less than children,” so runs the first, “need religious instruction, especially in these days ; and hence, in addition to the usual homily on the Gospel, which must be delivered at the parochial Mass on Sundays and Holydays, pastors and all those having care of souls shall also give a Catechetical Instruction to the faithful in simple language and in a way suited to the capacity of their hearers, choosing for this purpose whatever hour seems calculated to secure the best attendance, provided it is not that set apart for the instruction of children. In the discharge of this duty they shall use the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and shall so arrange as to expound in the course of four or five years the whole subject of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Precepts of the Church.”

“The catechist’s work,” explains the Encyclical, “consists in taking as his subject one of the truths of faith or morals, and explaining it in all its parts ; and as the aim of all such teaching ought to be amendment of life, he will proceed to draw a comparison between what God commands and what men really do ; then, by means of suitable examples prudently selected from Holy Writ, Ecclesiastical History, and the Lives of the Saints, he will bring home to the minds of his hearers and, so to say, point out with his finger how they should regulate their life and conduct ; and he will conclude

by an exhortation calculated to make them detest and avoid sin, and practise virtue."

In the following pages an attempt is made to facilitate the carrying out of these directions.

With this object in view, the raw material is first presented in the shape of a new translation of the Roman Catechism, which, as the Holy Father has laid down, must be used as the basis of all Catechetical Instruction ; next follows the corresponding section of the Larger Catechism of Pius X, which presents in brief and precise terms the substance of the teaching contained in the Roman Catechism ; and then comes the finished article in the shape of fully-developed Catechetical Instructions, which, in their original Italian dress, and in various French versions, have stood the test of more than half a century and are still popular with the clergy of Italy, France, Belgium and Switzerland.

In translating the two Catechisms there could of course be no question of any other than an absolutely faithful version. Opinion will always vary as to what a faithful version really means. But as a general principle it may be assumed that the aim of a translator is to convey in the clearest language the identical impression that would be produced on a reader of the original—to make the translation tell exactly what the original says, and neither more nor less. The style of the original must of course be kept in view ; but still more weight must be attached to the consideration that an important requisite in any translation, and especially in a translation of scientific works or of works of an official character like the Catechism of Trent, is that it be as clear, intelligible, and readable as it is possible to make it, without in any way being false to the sense of the original.

Some surprise may be experienced on finding that

the numbered questions into which each chapter is divided in the usual editions of the Roman Catechism are omitted in the present case. But these formed no part of the original text, were introduced at a later date, were often anything but felicitous, and had no official authority. To facilitate reference, however, the numbers have been retained; whereas the questions are replaced by marginal notes indicating the substance of the point discussed under each number, though not always as happily as might be desired, owing to the fact that the numbers were based on the questions, and the questions on paragraphs, which not infrequently were arranged in a more or less haphazard way. The only novelty that has been introduced into the text is that of the sections, headed by small capitals and marked by Roman numerals, into which each chapter has been split up on the basis of the natural divisions of the subject.

While the authority with which the Roman Catechism is invested did not allow any departure from the original, much greater freedom was permissible, and has in fact been used, with regard to Father Angelo Raineri's Course of Catechetical Instructions. The spirit of the original has, of course, been preserved as far as possible; but the warm glow of the Italian tongue is but little at home in English, and the version here given will doubtless read cold in comparison. The form of the original has in the main been adhered to; but as the Instructions possess no authority beyond that acquired by more than half a century's test of their merits, and as in their present dress they are intended as a practical, popular exposition of the material contained in the Roman Catechism, there seemed no reason why one should hesitate to introduce any modification that could be supposed likely to render the work more practical

and more popular ; and accordingly it must be remembered that the version here given is an adaptation rather than a faithful translation of the original. A comparison with the text, therefore, will show that while more than nine-tenths is really translation many changes have been introduced, either by adding, taking away, or toning down. Possibly some of these changes are not as happy as they might be, and hence it is only fair to Father Raineri to mention that in vain will the reader look in the original for the Instructions on the Church, on Purgatory, on Indulgences, on Grace, as well as for portions of other Instructions, particularly those explaining Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The regular course of Instructions is preceded by a fairly long Introduction comprising some account of the books that go to make up these pages, and an adaptation of the Compendium to the Gospels and Epistles of the Sundays, following on the lines of, and considerably amplifying, the *Praxis Catechismi*, which is found in most editions of the Roman Catechism. Owing to the difficulty of distributing the Instructions uniformly over the whole year, some of the applications are, perhaps, a little far-fetched ; but in general it will be found that the subjects assigned to each Sunday arise more or less naturally out of some particular text or texts of the Gospel or Epistle.

It is hardly necessary to add that these volumes make not the slightest pretence to originality. What is good in them is the work of others ; only the mistakes are my own.

J. H.

IRISH COLLEGE, ROME.
Feast of St. Charles Borromeo,

1911.

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HOMILETIC ADAPTATION

"THE PASTOR WILL BEAR IN MIND THAT WHENEVER IT COMES IN HIS WAY TO EXPOUND A PASSAGE OF THE GOSPEL, OR ANY OTHER PART OF SACRED SCRIPTURE, HE WILL ALWAYS BE ABLE TO FIND ITS SUBJECT-MATTER DISCUSSED UNDER SOME ONE OF THESE FOUR HEADS [THE CREED, THE SACRAMENTS, THE COMMANDMENTS, OR THE LORD'S PRAYER], WHICH HE WILL ACCORDINGLY UTILIZE AS THE SOURCE OF HIS DISCOURSE. IF, FOR INSTANCE, HE HAS TO EXPOUND THE GOSPEL OF THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: 'THERE SHALL BE SIGNS IN THE SUN AND IN THE MOON,' HE WILL FIND EVERYTHING RELATING THERETO UNDER THE ARTICLE 'FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD'; AND DRAWING ON THIS, HE WILL AT ONE AND THE SAME TIME IMPART TO HIS FLOCK A KNOWLEDGE OF BOTH CREED AND GOSPEL. IN ALL HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND HOMILIES, THEREFORE, THE PASTOR WILL MAKE IT HIS PRACTICE EVER TO KEEP IN VIEW THESE FOUR PRINCIPAL HEADS UNDER WHICH, AS HAS BEEN OBSERVED, THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE IS COMPRISED"—(THE ROMAN CATECHISM, Prefatory Chapter p. lxx, No. 14.)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

- (1) THE GENERAL JUDGMENT (Cr.¹ 236): *There shall be signs, etc.*
- (2) THY KINGDOM COME (Pr. 103): *The kingdom of God is at hand.*
- (3) THE CREATION (Cr. 63): *Heaven and earth shall pass away.*
- (4) THE DECALOGUE (Com. 10): *Let us walk honestly as in the day.*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- (1) RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION (Cr., Prefatory Chapter, p. lxiii): *Art Thou He that art to come?*
- (2) PROFESSION OF FAITH (Pr. 275): *John heard in prison.*
- (3) THE ANGELS (Cr. 75): *I send My angel before thy face.*
- (4) SACRED SCRIPTURE (Cr. 318): *They were written for our instruction.*

¹ Abbreviations: Cr. = Vol. I, On the Creed; Sac. = Vol. II, On the Sacraments; Com. = Vol. III, On the Commandments; Pr. = Vol. IV, on Prayer. The references are to the pages of the Instructions alone; but the teaching of the Roman Catechism will be found in the opening pages of the chapter to which the particular Instruction belongs.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

- (1) UNNECESSARY OATHS (Com. 90) : *He confessed and did not deny.*
- (2) BAPTISM (Sac. 56) : *Why dost thou baptize ?*
- (3) THE REAL PRESENCE (Sac. 121) : *There hath stood One in your midst.*
- (4) HUMILITY (Pr. 392) : *Let your modesty be known to all men.*

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

- (1) HOLY ORDERS (Sac. 484) : *The word of the Lord came to John.*
- (2) THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS (Cr. 408) : *For the remission of sins.*
- (3) DISPOSITIONS FOR COMMUNION (Sac. 188) : *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*
- (4) RASH JUDGMENT (Com. 433) : *Judge not before the time.*

CHRISTMAS DAY.

- (1) THE NATIVITY (Cr. 148) : *She brought forth her first-born Son.*
- (2) HIS ONLY SON (Cr. 118) : *In the beginning was the Word.*
- (3) THE INCARNATION (Cr. 140) : *The Word was made flesh.*
- (4) THE CHURCH HOLY (Cr. 360) : *That He might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable.*

SUNDAY WITHIN OCTAVE.

- (1) THE HAIL MARY (Pr. 297) : *Thy own soul a sword shall pierce.*
- (2) FASTING (Com. 527) : *By fastings and prayers serving day and night.*
- (3) PRAYER (Pr. 24) : *By fastings and prayers serving day and night.*
- (4) OUR FATHER (Pr. 73) : *Now he is not a servant but a son.*

THE EPIPHANY.

- (1) FAITH (Pr. 268) : *We have seen His star and are come to adore Him.*
- (2) WORSHIP (Com. 33) : *Falling down, they adored Him.*
- (3) DIVINITY OF CHRIST (Cr. 125) : *Falling down, they adored Him.*
- (4) THE CHURCH CATHOLIC (Cr. 368) : *The strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee.*

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

- (1) HOLYDAYS (Com. 517) : *According to the custom of the feast.*
- (2) FILIAL OBEDIENCE (Com. 150) : *He was subject to them.*
- (3) DUTY OF PARENTS (Com. 169) : *They returned seeking Him.*
- (4) THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION (Cr. 325) : *We are one body in Christ.*

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

- (1) THE MOTHER OF GOD (Cr. 148) : *The Mother of Jesus was there.*
- (2) THE END OF THE INCARNATION (Cr. 182) : *My hour is not yet come.*
- (3) GLUTTONY (Pr. 467) : *When men have well drunk.*
- (4) GRACE (Sac. 28) : *According to the grace given us.*

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

- (1) HERESY (Pr. 282) : *A leper coming adored Him.*
- (2) PRAYER (Pr. 46) : *Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.*
- (3) CONFESSION (Sac. 350) : *Go, show thyself to the priest.*
- (4) ANGER (Com. 274) : *Have peace with all men.*

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

- (1) NOTES OF THE CHURCH (Cr. 353) : *Jesus entered into the ship.*
- (2) EXTREME UNCTION (Sac. 450) : *Lord save us, we perish.*
- (3) OMNIPOTENCE (Cr. 48) : *Even the winds and the sea obey Him.*
- (4) CHARITY (Pr. 348) : *Love thy neighbour as thyself.*

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

- (1) THE CHURCH VISIBLE (Cr. 332) : *Let both grow until the harvest.*
- (2) SCANDAL (Com. 280) : *The enemy oversowed cockle among the wheat.*
- (3) HELL (Cr. 451) : *Bind it into bundles to burn.*
- (4) ALMS DEEDS (Com. 406) : *Put ye on the bowels of mercy.*

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

- (1) THE CHURCH (Cr. 339) : *The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed.*
- (2) INFALLIBILITY (Cr. 345) : *The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven.*

- (3) THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS (Cr. 395) : *Until the whole was leavened.*
- (4) DUTIES OF PARENTS (Com. 203) : *You were made a pattern to all.*

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

- (1) LIFE EVERLASTING (Cr. 443) : *They received every man a penny.*
- (2) SLOTH (Pr. 500) : *Why stand you here all the day idle?*
- (3) ENVY (Pr. 487) : *They murmured against the master of the house.*
- (4) MORTIFICATION (Com. 541) : *I chastise my body and bring it into subjection.*

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

- (1) THE POPE (Cr. 375) : *To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.*
- (2) CHARITY (Pr. 323) : *These have no roots.*
- (3) CONTRITION (Sac. 297) : *Choked with the cares, etc., of this life.*
- (4) TEMPTATION (Pr. 202) : *There was given me a sting of my flesh.*

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

- (1) THE PASSION (Cr. 175) : *All things shall be accomplished.*
- (2) MORTAL SIN (Pr. 371) : *A blind man sat by the wayside.*
- (3) PRAYER (Pr. 24) : *What wilt thou that I do to thee?*
- (4) CHARITY (Pr. 317) : *The greatest is charity.*

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

- (1) TEMPTATION (Pr. 208) : *To be tempted by the devil.*
- (2) ANGEL GUARDIAN (Cr. 81) : *He hath given His angels charge over thee.*
- (3) INTERIOR WORSHIP (Com. 40) : *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore.*
- (4) SATISFACTION (Sac. 408) : *Receive not the grace of God in vain.*

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

- (1) FRUITS OF MASS (Sac. 231) : *It is good for us to be here.*
- (2) SANCTIFICATION OF SUNDAY (Com. 132) : *Hear ye Him.*
- (3) GOD'S GOODNESS IN THE EUCHARIST (Sac. 172) : *He was transfigured before them.*
- (4) FRAUD (Com. 340) : *Let no man overreach or deceive his brother.*

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

- (1) BAD CONFESSION (Sac. 379) : *He was casting out a devil and the same was mute.*
- (2) THE CHURCH ONE (Cr. 360) : *Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation.*
- (3) HAIL MARY (Pr. 243) : *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee.*
- (4) IMMODEST LANGUAGE (Com. 318) : *Let it not be so much as named.*

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

- (1) OUR DAILY BREAD (Pr. 141) : *Whence shall we buy bread?*
- (2) HOLY COMMUNION (Sac. 180) : *They were filled.*
- (3) HUMILITY (Pr. 401) : *He fled again into the mountain alone.*
- (4) HOPE (Pr. 291) : *We are children of promise.*

PASSION SUNDAY.

- (1) BLASPHEMY (Com. 82) : *You have dishonoured Me.*
- (2) IMMORTALITY (Cr. 425) : *He shall not see death for ever.*
- (3) DUTIES TOWARDS PARENTS (Com. 150) : *I honour the Father.*
- (4) THE PASSION (Cr. 167) : *By a greater and more perfect tabernacle.*

PALM SUNDAY.

- (1) PASCHAL COMMUNION (Com. 547) : *Behold thy King cometh to thee.*
- (2) HALLOWED BE THY NAME (Pr. 86) : *Hosanna to the son of David.*
- (3) FERVENT COMMUNION (Sac. 200) : *They strewed their garments in the way.*
- (4) PRIDE (Pr. 392) : *He humbled Himself.*

EASTER SUNDAY.

- (1) THE RESURRECTION (Cr. 199) : *He is arisen.*
- (2) IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION (Cr. 205) : *Go, tell His disciples.*
- (3) THE DESCENT INTO HELL (Cr. 199) : *They came to the sepulchre.*
- (4) CONSCIENCE (Com. 558) : *The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

LOW SUNDAY.

- (1) THE HIERARCHY (Cr. 382) : *As the Father hath sent Me I send you.*
- (2) ACTUAL SIN (Pr. 355) : *Whose sins you shall forgive.*
- (3) FAITH (Pr. 268) : *Be not incredulous but believing.*
- (4) OATHS (Com. 90) : *The testimony of God is greater.*

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

- (1) DUTIES OF PARENTS (Com. 186) : *I am the good shepherd.*
- (2) THE PASSION (Cr. 182) : *I lay down My life for My sheep.*
- (3) PAPAL PRIMACY (Cr. 328) : *One fold and one shepherd.*
- (4) FIFTH PETITION (Pr. 168) : *When He was reviled He did not revile.*

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

- (1) THE BEATITUDES (Pr. 522) : *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*
- (2) HEAVEN (Cr. 443) : *Your joy no man shall take from you.*
- (3) PENANCE (Sac. 262) : *You shall be made sorrowful.*
- (4) NINTH COMMANDMENT (Com. 492) : *I beseech you to refrain yourselves from carnal desires.*

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

- (1) EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE (Sac. 358) : *Whither goest thou?*
- (2) SINS AGAINST FAITH (Pr. 282) : *Because they believe not in Me.*
- (3) CONTRITION (Sac. 269) : *Sorrow hath filled your heart.*
- (4) ANGER (Pr. 447) : *Be slow to anger.*

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

- (1) EFFICACY OF PRAYER (Pr. 32) : *Ask and you shall receive.*
- (2) THE LORD'S PRAYER (Pr. 66) : *You have not asked anything in My name.*
- (3) GOD OUR FATHER : (Pr. 73) : *The Father Himself loveth you.*
- (4) BACKBITING (Com. 441) : *If any man think himself religious, not bridling his tongue . . . his religion is in vain.*

ASCENSION DAY.

- (1) THE ASCENSION (Cr. 220) : *He was taken up into heaven.*
- (2) PRIVATE JUDGMENT (Cr. 303) : *He that believeth not shall be condemned.*
- (3) I BELIEVE (Cr. 22) : *He upbraided them with their incredulity.*
- (4) SLOTH (Pr. 507) : *Why stand you looking up to heaven?*

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

- (1) SCANDAL-TAKING (Com. 295) : *That you may not be scandalized.*
- (2) FIFTH COMMANDMENT (Com. 267) : *Whosoever killeth you.*
- (3) EXCESS IN WORSHIP (Com. 47) : *Will think he doth a service to God.*
- (4) LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR (Pr. 336) : *Have a constant mutual charity.*

WHIT SUNDAY.

- (1) SIGNS OF CONTRITION (Sac. 317) : *If anyone love Me he will keep My word.*
- (2) ANGER (Pr. 454) : *My peace I give unto you.*
- (3) THE HOLY GHOST (Cr. 252) : *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*
- (4) GOD EXISTS (Cr. 33) : *The wonderful works of God.*

TRINITY SUNDAY.

- (1) THE TRINITY (Cr. 48) : *In the name of the Father, etc.*
- (2) BAPTISM (Sac. 56) : *Baptizing them.*
- (3) FIFTH PETITION (Pr. 175) : *Forgive and you shall be forgiven.*
- (4) GOD'S INFINITE PERFECTIONS (Cr. 41) : *Of Him and by Him and in Him are all things.*

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) COVETOUSNESS (Pr. 416) : *I have bought a farm.*
- (2) DUTIES OF A HUSBAND (Com. 235) : *I have married a wife.*
- (3) VENIAL SIN (Pr. 377) : *They began to make excuses.*
- (4) SCANDAL (Com. 288) : *He that hateth his brother is a murderer.*

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) CALUMNY (Com. 454) : *This man receiveth sinners.*
- (2) GOD'S PROVIDENCE (Cr. 69) : *Doth he not go after that which is lost ?*
- (3) DRUNKENNESS (Pr. 474) : *Be sober.*
- (4) FASTING (Com. 534) : *Be sober and watch.*

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) DESPAIR (Pr. 303) : *At Thy word I will let down the net.*
- (2) PLAY AND GAMBLING (Pr. 513) : *We have laboured all night.*
- (3) THE CALLING OF THE APOSTLES (Cr. 332) : *They followed Him.*
- (4) THE END OF MAN (Cr. 93) : *The sufferings of this present time . . . the glory to come.*

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) CONTUMELY (Com. 448) : *Whosoever shall say, Thou fool.*
- (2) ON MAKING REPARATION (Com. 474) : *If thy brother hath anything against thee.*
- (3) FIFTH PETITION (Pr. 182) : *Then come and offer thy gift.*
- (4) MISCHIEF-MAKING (Com. 461) : *Let him refrain his tongue from evil.*

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) THE FOURTH PETITION (Pr. 148) : *I have compassion on the multitude.*
- (2) ACTUAL GRACE (Com. 566) : *They will faint in the way.*
- (3) THE SACRAMENTS (Sac. 22) : *They did eat and were filled.*
- (4) PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT (Sac. 309) : *That we may serve sin no more.*

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) OCCASIONS OF SIN (Sac. 324) : *Beware of false prophets.*
- (2) FREQUENT COMMUNION (Sac. 208) : *Every good tree yieldeth good fruit.*
- (3) THIRD PETITION (Pr. 121) : *He that doth the will of My Father.*
- (4) LUST (Pr. 424) : *To serve uncleanness and iniquity.*

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) ALMS DEEDS (Com. 406) : *Make unto you friends.*
- (2) DUTIES OF MASTERS (Com. 212) : *Give an account of thy stewardship.*
- (3) PAYMENT OF DEBTS (Com. 364) : *How much dost thou owe?*
- (4) VOLUNTARY PENANCES (Sac. 407) : *If you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live.*

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) MORTAL SIN (Pr. 365) : *He wept over it.*
- (2) HEARING MASS (Sac. 238) : *My house is a house of prayer.*
- (3) NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF CONFESSION (Sac. 350) :
If thou hadst known the things that are to thy peace.
- (4) UNCHARITABLE CONVERSATION (Com. 467) : *Neither do you murmur.*

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) MANNER OF PRAYER (Pr. 39) : *Two men went up into the temple to pray.*
- (2) HOW TO EXCITE CONTRITION (Sac. 303) : *Be merciful to me a sinner.*
- (3) ON PRIDE (Pr. 392) : *I am not as the rest of men.*
- (4) THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST (Cr. 261) : *One and the same Spirit worketh.*

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) TEMPORAL BLESSINGS (Pr. 310) : *They besought Him to lay His hand upon him.*
- (2) GOD'S WITNESSES (Cr. 296) : *I delivered that which I received.*
- (3) THE CAPITAL SINS (Pr. 385) : *They bring him one deaf and dumb.*
- (4) CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM (Sac. 76) : *He put His fingers into his ears.*

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) CONTRITION, INTERIOR (Sac. 275) : *With thy whole heart.*
- (2) THE FALL (Cr. 111) : *He went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.*
- (3) EXTREME UNCTION (Sac. 457) : *He bound up his wounds.*
- (4) DUTIES OF PARENTS (Com. 178) : *Fit ministers of the New Testament.*

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) THE HOLY NAME (Cr. 118) : *Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*
- (2) THE PRIESTHOOD (Sac. 491) : *Go, show yourselves to the priests.*
- (3) SACRAMENTAL SATISFACTION (Sac. 400) : *Go, show yourselves to the priests.*
- (4) OBLIGATIONS CONTRACTED IN BAPTISM (Sac. 63) : *God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) UNJUST KEEPING (Com. 357) : *You cannot serve God and Mammon.*
- (2) EVADING RESTITUTION (Com. 400) : *You cannot serve God and Mammon.*
- (3) EVILS OF DRUNKENNESS (Pr. 480) : *The works of the flesh are . . . drunkenness, revellings, and the like.*
- (4) CONCUISCENCE (Pr. 439) : *The flesh lusteth against the spirit.*

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) PARENTAL VIGILANCE (Com. 194) : *He delivered him to his mother.*
- (2) CONFESSION (Sac. 371) : *He that was dead sat up and began to speak.*
- (3) FRATERNAL CORRECTION (Pr. 343) : *Instruct such a one.*
- (4) EVILS OF ENVY (Pr. 493) : *Provoking one another, envying one another.*

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) SANCTIFICATION OF SUNDAY (Com. 125) : *Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day ?*
- (2) GLUTTONY (Pr. 467) : *He went into the house . . . to eat bread.*
- (3) I BELIEVE IN GOD (Cr. 27) : *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.*
- (4) ON CONFIDENCE IN GOD (Pr. 297) : *Rooted and founded in charity.*

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) THE DUTY OF LOVING GOD (Pr. 330) : *The greatest and first commandment.*
- (2) MALICIOUS INJURY (Com. 373) : *Love thy neighbour as thyself.*
- (3) MEEKNESS (Pr. 460) : *With all humility and mildness.*
- (4) HUSBAND AND WIFE (Com. 230) : *Supporting one another in charity.*

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) SEVENTH PETITION (Pr. 227) : *They brought to Him one sick of the palsy.*
- (2) FAITH (Pr. 261) : *Jesus seeing their faith.*
- (3) CONFIRMATION (Sac. 106) : *He will confirm you unto the end.*
- (4) INDULGENCES (Sac. 415) : *Nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS (Sac. 224) : *A king who made a marriage for his son.*
- (2) SACRILEGIOUS COMMUNION (Sac. 193) : *A man who had not on a wedding garment.*
- (3) MATRIMONY (Sac. 523) : *The marriage indeed is ready.*
- (4) THEFT (Com. 334) : *Let him that stole, steal now no more.*

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) THE CREED (Cr. 5) : *He believed, and his whole house.*
- (2) LAST SACRAMENTS (Sac. 450) : *Lord, come before my son die.*
- (3) EFFECTS OF BAPTISM (Sac. 82) : *Thy son liveth.*
- (4) IMPURITY (Com. 499) : *See how you walk circumspectly.*

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) RESTITUTION (Com. 394) : *I will pay thee all.*
- (2) UNJUST TAKING (Com. 342) : *One owed him ten thousand talents.*
- (3) PURGATORY (Cr. 466) : *Until he paid all the debt.*
- (4) DEDICATION TO GOD (Sac. 88) : *Put ye on the armour of God.*

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) DECEIT AND LYING (Com. 426) : *They consulted how to ensnare Jesus.*
- (2) THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY (Cr. 382) : *To God the things that are God's.*
- (3) REPARATION (Com. 388) : *To Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.*
- (4) WHEN AND HOW TO WORSHIP (Com. 40) : *Unto the glory and praise of God.*

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) DESPAIR AND PRESUMPTION (Pr. 393) : *If I but touch the hem of His garment.*
- (2) RELICS (Com. 54) : *If I but touch the hem of His garment.*
- (3) PROFANATION OF HOLY PLACES (Com. 61) : *He saw the multitude making a tumult.*
- (4) THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT (Com. 310) : *Whose glory is their shame.*

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

- (1) THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY (Cr. 425) : *They shall gather together His elect.*
- (2) THE CHURCH PERENNIAL (Cr. 339) : *There shall arise false prophets.*
- (3) THE END OF MAN (Cr. 87) : *My word shall not pass away.*
- (4) EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE (Sac. 365) : *That you may be filled with the knowledge of His will.*

INTRODUCTION

I—THE ROMAN CATECHISM

IN the Introduction to the seventh volume of his monumental *History of the Popes*, Dr. Ludwig Pastor sketches in masterly outline the seething elements lying beneath the seemingly unruffled surface of the whole social, political, and religious system that had prevailed for well-nigh a thousand years all over Europe, and to all appearance was still secure in the early years of the sixteenth century. But far-sighted men scented danger, and were troubled with forebodings that the clouds were gathering and that a fierce tempest was about to sweep over the face of the earth. New ideas were in the air, men's minds were deeply stirred, authority had lost much of its former hold, respect for the traditions of the past was diminishing almost visibly, and a catalogue of grievances, real and imaginary, was being prepared day by day and carefully laid by, to be brought forth the moment the time had come to clamour for redress.

If it is true that there was much cause for complaint, much that called for amendment, it is equally true that warnings were unheeded, and that little was done to satisfy the growing demand for reform, which daily sounded louder and louder from both sides of the Alps. Towards the close of the Lateran Council, just as the great tempest was about to burst forth in all its fury, Pico della Mirandola, in the presence of the Pope and of the assembled prelates, drew a gloomy picture of the corruption that prevailed. He pointed out that while much was said about the making of laws, very little was heard about the observance of them; he solemnly reminded the Pope that it was his bounden duty to remedy

the abuses that cried aloud to heaven for vengeance ; and he concluded with the words of warning that were so soon to be realized : “ If Leo leaves crime any longer unpunished, if he refuses to heal the Church’s wounds, it is to be feared that God will Himself apply a remedy, and not a slow one, and that He will amputate and destroy the diseased members with fire and sword.”

That very year the storm burst. In the heat of a controversy about a point that was unimportant enough in itself an Augustinian friar, who had been hitherto almost unknown, deliberately put the match to the inflammable heap of folly, neglect, and abuse that had been accumulating for centuries. For some years, deep down in his heart, Martin Luther had been cherishing a spirit of antagonism to the Church’s teaching on good works, and had been formulating a new system of his own based on justification by faith alone, and on the absence of free will in man. The imprudent zeal of the Dominican preacher of a new indulgence afforded him an occasion of venting his views ; and on the 31st of October, 1517, he posted upon the door of the castle church of Wittenberg a series of propositions challenging a “ disputation for the purpose of explaining the power of indulgences.” In itself a challenge of the kind was not at all strange or likely to cause trouble ; but the manner in which he proceeded—the scarcely concealed contempt and hatred of the Holy See, the cunning admixture of truth and falsehood, together with the intense interest then being manifested in the question of indulgences—all these elements helped to arouse popular feeling, to incline the masses to take up Luther’s protest as their own, and to elevate him from the position of a mere professor in a quiet university town to the position of a leader and a hero who was voicing the general discontent against the authority no less than the shortcomings of the Church of Rome.

The stone had been set rolling. It now began its headlong rush down the incline. In a sermon which he

preached and published shortly after, and which had a wide circulation, Luther attacked the Catholic teaching on Penance, questioned the authority of the Church, and early in the following May had gone so far as to deny the Church's visibility. Before the end of November he had appealed from a Pope subject to error to a General Council, early in 1519 had come to speak of the Pope as Antichrist, and before the autumn of 1520 had published a work which he himself has described as "directed against the Pope in language as violent as if I were addressing Antichrist," and in which he denied the distinction between clergy and laity, the right of the Church to interpret Scripture, and the claim of the Pope to summon a Council. The Bull *Exurge*, which was published against him in the autumn of the same year, enumerated and unconditionally condemned forty-one errors relating to free-will, original sin, the sacraments, faith, grace, sin, penance, confession, good works, purgatory, the Pope, excommunication, and the authority of General Councils.

This condemnation brought matters to a crisis. Luther had either to submit to the authority of the Church or break definitely with it, once for all. The headstrong pride that formed so prominent a feature in his character would not let him submit, and accordingly he openly disavowed Church authority and fell back on a new principle which in one shape or another forms the basis of Protestantism ever since—that is to say, the principle of private judgment on the sense of Sacred Scripture, in opposition to the authority and interpretation of the Church. The flood-gates of confusion were thus let loose, and no effort of his could ever succeed in closing them again: "His disciples, proceeding on this principle, undertook to prove from plain texts of the Bible that his own doctrine was erroneous, and that the Reformation itself wanted reforming. Carlstadt, Zuinglius, Ecolampadius, Muncer, and a hundred more of his followers, wrote and preached against him

and against each other, with the utmost virulence ; whilst each of them still professed to ground his doctrine on the written word of God alone . . . till their mutual contradictions and discords became so numerous and scandalous as to overwhelm the thinking part of them with grief and confusion.”¹

The influence exercised by Luther’s sermons on the minds of the bulk of the German people was immense. The reason was not far to seek. Borne down by years of political oppression they hailed the words of one who was so ready to rail against all authority ; and an onlooker (Erasmus) describes how he saw them “with threatening looks and eyes darting fire, just like men beside themselves, after listening to the fierce discourses that had been poured into their ears.” The warning words uttered by the good Pope Hadrian VI, in 1522, fell on deaf ears when he begged the civil authorities to take prompt measures to repress Luther’s revolutionary doctrines : “The revolt now directed against the spiritual authority will ere long turn on the temporal authority as well.” These prophetic words were soon realized. Luther’s treatise on the *Secular Magistracy*, advocating the abolition of all authority, civil as well as ecclesiastical, appeared next year ; and the deluded peasantry, carried away by his fiery appeals, issued a manifesto based on his writings, rose in organized rebellion, proceeded to plunder and devastation, proclaimed the overthrow of existing institutions, and the establishment of a new kingdom of God which was to be composed of the just alone. Frightened by the storm he had raised, Luther deserted them and called on the civil authorities to subdue them with fire and sword ; and when this had been done, and the rebellion was finally quelled at the battle of Mülhausen, in May, 1525, it was computed that a hundred thousand of the deluded peasants had fallen in battle in the interval.

¹ Milner, *End of Religious Controversy* (Letter viii.).

When the tempest had begun to subside, and the conflagration to be spent, the Church's chief pastor at length opened his eyes to the ravages that had been done. And when he came to reckon up the loss, it was only to find that nearly one-third of Europe had broken away from the ancient unity of the Catholic faith—nearly the whole of the North (Ireland excepted) and a great part of Central Europe had cast off the bonds of reverence and authority that had so long united them to the Holy See, and had taken up with a new religion; and in the wake of that great falling-away there followed untold evils which one¹ who had no love for the Catholic Church thus sums up: "The sad dismemberment of families; the multiplication of parties, schisms, and factions rising out of religious prejudice, and often issuing in religious wars; the growth of mental habits tending either to indifferentism on one side, or to interdicted speculations on the other; the diffusion of an egotistic, self-complacent, and subjective spirit making light of all ecclesiastical traditions, and exciting controversies, whose vibrations are still felt in almost every part of Europe."

Yet years passed, and in vain did the cry resound for help and salvation—one after another the hopes of better things were shattered, pain and sorrow took possession of the noblest hearts, and it seemed as if all were lost, when salvation came, and, as in the days of Gregory VII, came from within the Church. The Church might for a time be disfigured by hideous evils, might be trodden under foot by her enemies; but the day was near at hand when it was to be seen that the divine spark of life within her was not extinct—that she was not dead, but sleeping. In the darkest hour of her need men were found who, imbued with the spirit of God, and holding fast to the treasure of the ancient faith, worked with ardent zeal and untiring

¹ Hardwick, *History of the Christian Church during the Reformation*, p. 10 (London; 2nd ed., 1865).

energy for their own sanctification, and, side by side with this, for a general and radical renewal and reformation of the life of the Church. "Saints, apostles, and heroes," concludes Pastor, "sprang up, and by their mode of life introduced a new era for the regeneration of the Church, and solved the century-old problem of ecclesiastical reform." Finally, rising out of their labours, controlling and directing their energies, rose the stately edifice erected by the Catholic Church in the Council of Trent.

Seventeen weary years of defeat and disaster, hesitation and inactivity, had rolled by since that eventful day on which Martin Luther had posted up his list of propositions on the church door in Wittenberg, when, in 1534, Alexander Farnese became Pope under the name of Paul III. He had been long conscious that the evils of the time demanded prompt and radical measures, and from the first days of his pontificate he determined to assemble a General Council as soon as possible. With this object in view he began at once to select cardinals and others on whom he could rely to do thoroughly the work that lay before him. With a perseverance that wavered before no obstacle—and on every side, as if by magic, rose obstacles that would daunt any other man—he went on his way, smoothing difficulties and allaying doubts, until after ten years of weary waiting and heart-rending opposition, his efforts were crowned with success, and on December 13, 1545, the first meeting of the long-desired Council was held at Trent, "for the advancement of the Christian religion, the uprooting of heresies, the restoration of peace, the reformation of clergy and laity, and the overthrow of the enemies of the Church of Christ."

Two great evils called for remedy—widespread heresy and wider-spread abuse; and the earlier sessions of the Council of Trent were devoted to discussing how best to cope with both. After prolonged deliberations it was decided that questions of faith and of practical

reform should be taken up concurrently, and hence it is that in the Transactions of the Council two sets of decrees are found side by side—one dealing with doctrine, the other with discipline. The decrees on doctrine are first set forth at considerable length in the form of dogmatic treatises (chapters), followed by short, pithy propositions pronouncing anathema against those who reject the true teaching of the Church on the point under discussion; while the decrees on reform lay down a number of ordinances relating to the ritual, discipline, and general organization of the Church.

The procedure adopted throughout the sittings of the Council was modelled on that of the earlier Councils. A certain number of commissions, consisting of theologians and canonists, were appointed to prepare in advance the questions that were to be considered; the recommendations of each commission were next submitted to a general congregation of bishops; and finally the deliberations of both were adopted, rejected, or modified by the Fathers in public session assembled.

One of the first points that engaged the attention of the Fathers of the Council of Trent was the necessity of compiling a reliable Catechism to counteract the tactics of the reformers, who, as is pointed out in the Preface to the Roman Catechism,¹ "seeing that they could not hope to reach all by word of mouth, drew up a number of Catechisms which, under the specious semblance of apparent piety, succeeded only too readily in imposing on the good faith of simple souls." To counteract this widespread and pernicious evil, the Fathers of the Council saw that it was not enough to define the more important points of Catholic teaching, but that it was also necessary to provide, for the instruction of the faithful in the truths of faith, one reliable manual which could safely be followed as a standard by the Church's authorized pastors and teachers. The result was the Roman Catechism.

¹ Cf. *infra*, p. *xv.*, No. 6.

Of the compilation ¹ of a Catechism mention was made for the first time in the Council at the session of April 5, 1546; and in a plenary session held on the 13th of the same month a draft of a decree was read proposing that "there be published in Latin and in the vernacular a catechism to be compiled by capable hands, for children and uninstructed adults who need milk rather than solid food." The fifth, sixth, and seventh sessions, however, were fully occupied on such pressing questions as original sin, justification, and the doctrine of the sacraments, so that no further mention of a Catechism is to be found in the published Transactions of these sessions of the Council. The difficulties that had dogged the steps of the Council since Paul III had first endeavoured to convoke it, were not yet at an end. The eighth session had been fixed for April 21, 1547, when a contagious disease made its appearance and led to the suspension of the sittings at Trent. It was decided to transfer the Council to Bologna, but fresh difficulties arose, national jealousies were again aroused, a baneful influence was exercised by the persistent interference of civil rulers, so that precious time rolled by without anything further being done; and it was only after an interval of four years that the Council was able to meet again. It remained sitting for a year and a half, was again prorogued for two years, but ten years had actually elapsed before the sittings were again resumed (1562).

After an interval of seventeen years the question of a Catechism was once more introduced, early in January, this time by the procurators of Charles IX, seconded by those of the Emperor Ferdinand I. Several private sittings were held between January 29 and February 26,

¹ For the details that follow regarding the composition of the Catechism of the Council of Trent I am indebted to the kindness of Father Reginald Walsh, O.P. He points out, however, that for the most part he follows the *Geschichte des Römischen Katechismus* of Stephen von Skibniewski, who won first place some ten years ago in a competition for the best essay on the Roman Catechism. In the preparation of his essay von Skibniewski not only collected the best available material, but also consulted many original sources hitherto unexplored in this particular department, including the various libraries of Rome, Florence, Munich and Innsbruck, as well as the archives of the Dominican, Franciscan, and Augustinian Orders.

for the purpose of deciding on the nature and contents of the proposed Catechism. Though it is sometimes stated that a committee was actually formed on February 26 to proceed to the compilation of the desired manual, there is no evidence to show that this was done till towards the end of that year, when, after a protracted discussion, the selection of those who were to compile the Catechism was left to the Papal Legates, that is, Cardinals Gonzaga, Seripandi, Du Puy, Hosius, Simonetta, and Altemps, who were empowered to appoint a committee for the purpose. The first mention to be found of the actual existence of this committee is contained in the words of the legates (January 3, 1563) when they inform the imperial procurators that certain prelates have been nominated and that these are already at work on the Catechism.

The Catechism Commission appointed by the Papal Legates was composed as follows: The President was Cardinal Seripandi (1493-1563), a man of distinguished learning and virtue. As General of the Augustinian Order, and as a member of the Council of Trent, he rendered great services to the Church; he had declined the see of Aquila and had offered to resign his Generalship; subsequently, however, he was made Archbishop of Salerno; and eventually he was created cardinal in 1561. Soon afterwards he was sent back to Trent as legate by Pius IV, and on the death of Cardinal Gonzaga he took the first place in the Council.

The chief members of his committee were: Leonardo Marini, Archbishop of Lanciano; Egidio Foscarari, Bishop of Modena; Muzio Calini, Bishop of Zara and afterwards of Terni; and Francesco Foreiro. A few words as to each of these:—

Leonardo Marini (1509-1573), the scion of a noble Genoese house, entered the Dominican Order in his native Chios, and in course of time went to Genoa to complete his theological studies, where he soon became known as a distinguished preacher. Julius III made him a bishop

and administrator of Mantua, in place of Cardinal Gonzaga who was obliged to absent himself from that diocese owing to the fact that he had to reside at Trent as Legate to the Council. It was not long, however, till Marini was sent as Nuncio to Madrid, where he displayed inflexible firmness combined with consummate tact, and succeeded in obtaining all the Pope's demands. The young bishop's next act shows in another light what kind of man he was. Taking a companion he went in the disguise of a merchant to Geneva, made the acquaintance of Calvin and Viret and Beza, and even accepted an invitation from Calvin to dine. At table he turned the conversation on Catholic beliefs and practices, especially the invocation of saints, which he defended so well that the others were reduced to silence, Calvin in particular being so confounded that he rose abruptly and put an end to the discussion. Marini, seeing that though he might confute Calvin he could not convert him, soon left Geneva so as not to expose his own life and that of his companion to danger. In 1562 Pius IV made him Archbishop of Lanciano, and then at the urgent request of Cardinal Gonzaga sent him to the Council, where it soon became evident that he was one of the ablest and most zealous of its members. Among the objects of his particular attention were the questions on the residence of bishops, the sacrament of orders, communion under both species, and especially the sacrifice of the Mass. On the termination of the Council Marini returned to Lanciano where he at once began the work of reforming his diocese in accordance with the Tridentine decrees. Soon afterwards, however, he was despatched as Apostolic Legate to Maximilian II in connexion with matters arising out of the Council and with some complications which had unexpectedly appeared. In Vienna he was attended by his usual success; but on his return he asked and obtained permission to resign his diocese in order to devote the remaining days of his life to prayer and study, especially as he was

anxious to write against the then nascent heresies ; but his desire was not destined to be gratified, for in 1566 Pius V translated him to Alba Pompeia and at the same time made him Apostolic Visitor of twenty-five dioceses. In this new sphere of action Marini was greatly esteemed and beloved by his metropolitan, St. Charles Borromeo, who, like himself, was zealous for the introduction of the Tridentine reform. Besides helping to prepare the Catechism, Marini was also one of the revisers of the Roman Breviary and Missal.¹

Egidio Foscarari (1510-1563), a distinguished Dominican preacher and professor, had been appointed by Paul III, in 1546, to the Mastership of the Sacred Palace, an office he retained till 1550, when he was promoted by Julius III to the see of Modena, which he worthily filled. Retrenching every expense in his own household, he was able to build a refuge for penitents, and even sold both ring and crozier to feed the poor. But, as often happens, his zeal and virtue gained him an enemy, and an anonymous calumniator of his orthodoxy actually succeeded in having him and four other saintly prelates imprisoned in the Castle of St. Angelo, where he was kept for seven months, till, on the death of Julius III, the Holy Office, by a solemn decree (January 7, 1560), declared the charge to be utterly unfounded. To compensate him in some way for what had happened, Pius IV sent him to Trent in 1561, where he was entrusted with the examination of everything to be laid before the Council and with the arrangement of the various sessions. Besides the care of these preliminaries he also had charge of the wording of the canons, so that evidently he was one of the most prominent members of that great assembly. At the close of the Council he was summoned to Rome by Pius IV to continue his labours on the Roman Missal, Breviary, and Catechism. He is buried in the Church of the Minerva, in Rome,

¹ See Dom Bäumer's history of the Breviary ; French trans., vol. ii., p. 164, note. Also, Casitto, *Il rito Domenicano*, ii., p. 161.

and the epitaph that marks his last resting-place records that he did more than anyone else for the Catechism, Missal, and Breviary.

Muzio Calini, Archbishop of Zara (1555), who was another of the most prominent members of the Council, was on the Catechism Commission from the beginning. According to Mangelot¹ his work lay in the revision of the sections on the *Creed* and the *Sacraments*. He also took part in revising the Roman Missal and Breviary, and he is said to have been a member of the Commission of the Index. He died in the odour of sanctity in 1570.

Francesco Foreiro, a Dominican (✠ 1581), was a scholar versed beyond most of his contemporaries in Hebrew and Greek, but best known as the author of a commentary on Isaias. In 1561 he was sent to the Council by the King of Portugal as his theologian; and such was the impression made by Foreiro's learning that he was entrusted with the supervision of the text of the decrees. Schrödl² says that he took part in preparing the new edition of the Roman Missal and Breviary, and that he was secretary of the Tridentine Commission of the Index.³ On the termination of the Council he worked at Rome on the Roman Catechism as well as on the Breviary and Missal. In fact he himself says that Marini, Calini, and he were employed together on the Breviary.⁴

These were the chief, but not the only, *collaborateurs*: there were several others whose co-operation was either preparatory or less extensive. Thus Michael Medina, a Franciscan, one of the theologians sent by Philip II, took part in the explanation of the fourth article of the Creed, while another Spaniard, Christopher Sanctotisio, an Augustinian, had to do with the ninth.

In the same way, it used to be taken for granted

¹ *Dict. de Theologie*, vol. ii., c. 1917

² *Kirchenl.*, iv., 1601.

³ Not to be confounded with the existing Congregation of the Index. Some speak of Foreiro as first secretary of this Congregation. This is a mistake. The first secretary was Antonio Posio, O.S.F.

⁴ See a note in the French translation of Bäumer's work: Biron, *Histoire du Brév.*, ii., 164.

that the writers already mentioned elaborated the whole of the sections on the Commandments and the Sacraments; but von Skibniewski shows that this is incorrect. In the Vatican Archives¹ he discovered a contemporary list of the subjects to be treated and of the persons to whom they were assigned. From this it appears that as regards the Commandments the first four were assigned to four French theologians, whose names are not mentioned; but the "Catalogus Legat. Patrum, &c. . . . Cont. Trid: Brixiae, 1563," states that twelve Doctors of the Sorbonne were sent by Charles IX to Trent, and another "Catalogus" (Patavii, 1563) states that ten more French theologians were present; it may be inferred that the four co-operators in this part of the Catechism were chosen from amongst them.

The fifth was assigned to a Dominican, John de Ludeña, procurator of the Bishop of Sigüenza; and the sixth to another Dominican, Benedict Herba, the Bishop of Brescia's theologian. Herba, who later on accepted the see of Casale, only under threat of ecclesiastical punishment, was an intimate friend of St. Charles Borromeo. The seventh was also assigned to a Dominican, Eliseus Capys, of Venice, the Archbishop of Prague's theologian. He had distinguished himself in the discussions on faith and ecclesiastical discipline, and, like Ludeña and Herba, was the author of some theological treatises. The eighth was assigned to a distinguished Spanish Franciscan, Alphonsus Contreras, the confessor

¹ Deputatio Theologorum pro Catechismo. 9. 7^{bris} 1563

4 praecepta priora decalogi, 4 theol. Gall. cum preambulis.

6 posteriora: pr. Ludwegna.....ne occidas.

pr. Benedictus.....ne sis moechus.

pr. Heliseus.....ne fureris.

pr. Contreras.....ne falsum testimonium dicas.

Theologo Granat...2^a. ultima.

Sacramenta :—

3^a: baptismus, confirmatio, Euchar^a, tribus theologis Flandris;

Nicolao Anglo, poenitentia;

fr. Petro Frz., matrimonium;

pri. Ortulano, ordo;

Motano, extrema unctio.

Non discedant a doctrina Concilii Tridentini. Et apponant aliquam formam docendi et monendi suscipientes sacramenta.

—(Vat. Archiv. Trento XII., p. 37.)

of the Duke of Alva, but whether the Granada theologian who was told off for the ninth and tenth Commandments was Antonio Covarruvias, or, as is more probable, Juan Fonseca, still remains uncertain.

As regards the sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist were assigned to three Flemish theologians. Not only the famous Baius,¹ but his two associates, Hessels and Cornelius Jansenius, took part in the Council by desire of Philip II, so as to represent the Louvain school of theology; and possibly these may be the three Flemish theologians referred to. Indeed, according to von Skibniewski, some indications go to show that they were the authors in question. At any rate, it is worthy of notice that in the section on the sacraments in Hessel's own Catechism, written in Flemish, only the three above-named sacraments are explained.² The author did not live to complete his work. It may be added that Thijm³ positively states that Jansenius, who was afterwards Bishop of Ghent and a commentator on Scripture, did take part in preparing the Roman Catechism.

The theologian familiarly known as "Anglus," because of his having accompanied Cardinal Pole on the latter's mission to England, is Nicholas Ormanetus of Verona. His particular duty in England had been to make a visitation of Oxford and Cambridge, in every college of which he effected various reforms. He was one of St. Charles Borromeo's most fervent and faithful disciples, was raised to the see of Padua by St. Pius V in 1570, and was afterwards sent by Gregory XIII as Nuncio to Madrid, where he died in 1557.

¹ Baius was President of the College of Adrian VI, a position which, notwithstanding the condemnation of his propositions, he retained till his death. John Leonard Van der Eycken (Hassellius), who had been sent as theologian or deputy of the University, with Ruard Tapper and Ravestein, having died at Trent, on January 5, 1552, Baius was chosen to succeed him.

Baius and Hessels had already acquired notoriety by their doctrines. It is said that their appointment was made with reluctance, and merely to prevent the Germans and others from asserting that there was not a representation of different shades of opinion at the Council, and consequently insufficient freedom of discussion.

² *Scheeben, Kirchenlexicon*, v., 1931.

³ *Ibid* vi., 1217.

Peter Fernandez, a Dominican, was one of the most distinguished among the many great theologians who came to the Council from Spain. He had been for years professor in Salamanca. After the Council St. Pius V, who held him in high esteem on account of his learning and virtues, appointed him apostolic visitor to the Carmelite nuns in Spain. As St. Teresa's confessor during a very trying period, he contributed much to the work of reform. She regarded him as "*persona de muy santa vida y grandes letras y entendimiento.*" He was also the king's confessor and prior of Salamanca, where he died in 1597.

Cosmas Hortulanus Damiani, Abbot of the Augustinian Canons Regular in Villa Bertrando, was one of the royal theologians sent by Philip II to Trent. He was the author of a learned Commentary on the Canticles.

Arias Montanus (1527-1598) accompanied the Bishop of Segovia as his theologian. At Trent very few equalled him in the knowledge of languages, biblical or modern. His fame rests chiefly on the Antwerp Polyglot and on excellent Scripture commentaries.

Once the sections had been thus assigned no further mention of the Catechism is to be found in the Acts of the Council till the twenty-fourth session, when at a general meeting held on September 11, 1563, the draft of a decree on the Catechism was introduced. Even at its first reading, it showed that a great change had been made in the plan proposed in the fourth session. Instead of a manual for children and uninstructed adults, a theological work or a hand-book for the guidance and use of preachers and catechists was now spoken of. The new plan was discussed at several meetings, and some amendments were suggested. The Bishops of Zara, Patti, and Fiesole opposed the idea of translations of the Catechism into the vernacular, and the Bishop of Cadiz wished to suppress the first part of the proposed decree on the ground that a decision on the use of the Catechism was out of place before the Catechism

was compiled. But the Council accepted neither amendment, and in the general meeting of November 2 the decree was passed in its final form, as follows:—

“That the faithful may approach the sacraments with greater reverence and devotion, the Council enjoins on all bishops that not only shall they themselves explain the efficacy and use of the sacraments in a manner suited to the capacity of the recipient, when about to administer them to the faithful, but that they shall endeavour to have this done by the pastor piously and prudently, and, when necessary, in the vernacular if this can conveniently be done, observing the form to be prescribed for each of the sacraments by the Council in a Catechism which bishops shall take care to have faithfully translated into the vernacular and duly expounded to their flocks by all pastors.”

Nothing more was done in this respect by the Council. There was a general desire to bring its proceedings to a close as soon as possible; and the opening of the final session was fixed for December 3, 1563. The tidings that the Pope was ill contributed to this determination. It would appear that an order was then issued to lay before the assembled Fathers, previous to the opening of the session, all the work that had been done in the matter of the Index, Missal, Breviary, and Catechism. The order was complied with in the general meetings held between the 22nd and 25th of November; but as the work was not completed the Holy Father was requested to take charge of it and have it duly finished and made public.¹

The MS. contributions towards the Catechism are not extant, so that it is not known what progress had been made at that date. The author of a preface to an old edition of the Catechism says that the Tridentine theologians “had been able to accomplish nothing, for want of time”; but this does not commend itself to von Skibniewski’s judgment. He inclines to the idea

¹ Cf. *Can. et Decr. Con. Trid.*, Session xxv., cap. xxi. (Dec. 4, 1563).

that Serai comes nearer the mark when he speaks of "that crude and undigested mass of material which the Fathers had collected at the Council of Trent." All that is certain is, that the Catechism Committee took more than three years to complete their task; that some of the members of the Commission were working also at the Missal and Breviary; and that the Catechism was finished in less than three years from the conclusion of the Council.

Whatever had been done before the close of the Council was given in charge to the Auditor of the Rota, Gabriel Paleotti, who brought it to Rome, where Pius IV lost no time in appointing others to continue the work, so that Torrensis, writing to Cardinal Hosius on April 17, 1564, was able to report that it was proceeding apace.

Cardinal Seripandi, the former head of the Commission, had died the preceding month. His place was now worthily filled by St. Charles Borromeo. In December of the same year (1564) a letter to Cardinal Hosius, written by Lombard, mentions that Foscarari's work was done, and that he had gone to his reward on December 21. His death must have been a severe loss to St. Charles Borromeo. Foreiro also, who was one of the four chief *collaborateurs*, desired to return home on the termination of the Council, but St. Charles had succeeded in retaining his services, and in securing those of Statius, another Portuguese theologian. Gabriel Paleotti also was, according to von Skibniewski, employed on the Catechism about this time.

The work now entered on the stage of revision from the theological point of view—attention being still directed to the matter rather than to the style of the Catechism. Even at the date now reached, however, the famous classical scholar and humanist, Pogiani, took an active part in the work. As is well known, he was Latin secretary to several cardinals, including St. Charles Borromeo, and it was he that wrote the Acts

of the first Council of Milan. On Christmas Day, 1564, he writes to Minali as follows :—

“The charge has been given by the Pope to three Bishops, Marini, Calini and Foscarari, to compile, in accordance with the decree of the Council of Trent, a manual on Christian Doctrine, in which priests may have ready at hand both matter and method for the instruction of those entrusted to their care. In the composition of this I also have been called on to take part, and I have devoted these four entire months to it, so that I have not had a moment to spare for any other work.”

He also states that Paulus Manutius, Cornelius Amaltheus, and Silvius Antonianus gave their assistance. As regards Manutius, the classic elegance of whose Latin composition was so much admired in those days, it is probable that to him is largely due the perfection of style that characterizes the Catechism and makes it, in the judgment of some, superior even to the work of Melchior Canus. Piranus, for instance,¹ having described the initial work of collecting and arranging the material of the Catechism, proceeds :—

“Desiring, moreover, that the matter thus wisely and carefully put together should reach the hands of ecclesiastics in the form of a book, and that this book should be as polished and elegant in Latinity as possible, he arranged that for this purpose it should be entrusted to Paulus Manutius, one of the best Latin scholars of his age, and a good Catholic.”

The same is repeated by Graveson, who says: “Its Latinity and Ciceronian style are due to Paulus Manutius.”

Of Cornelius Amaltheus little is known beyond what Pogiani tells of him. As for Antonianus, he was St. Charles Borromeo's private secretary, became secretary of the Sacred College, and finally cardinal (✕ 1603). The only other scholar who is known to have been on the Catechism Commission at this time is Pietro Galesini,

¹ *De Laudibus Catechismi ad Parochos*, p. 127 (Romae, 1669).

who, even in that learned age, was distinguished for his knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as well as of ecclesiastical history.

From the number of illustrious men whom St. Charles brought together to complete the labours of the Tridentine theologians, some idea may be formed of the efficiency with which he conducted the revision of the Catechism, utilizing not only great theologians, but exquisite Latinists, his design being, in the words of Ripamonti, "that the divinity and sublimity of the subject should be unfolded in and attended by a corresponding dignity of language; accordingly, calling in the greatest masters of the Latin tongue in that age, he was enabled through their aid to produce a work that might well be taken to have seen the light in the golden age of Roman literature."

The responsibility for the literary perfection of the Catechism now rested on Calini, Galesini, and Pogiani. It was divided into four parts, and Calini who had already worked at it, undertook the revision of the *Creed* and the *Sacraments*; while Galesini saw to the *Decalogue*, and Pogiani to *Prayer*. This was the task of which Pogiani wrote to Minali the words already quoted; and that this first literary revision was almost accomplished by December 24, 1564, appears from what St. Charles Borromeo writes on that day to Cardinal Hosius:—

"The Catechism is complete; it has been drawn up by the skill and industry of capable men, who are now engaged in polishing it, so that when the final touches are given it, the work will appear as highly finished and as perfect as possible."

But St. Charles was not yet satisfied—he desired absolute uniformity of style; and, to secure it, early in the following year he induced his uncle, Pius IV, to entrust Pogiani with a second and final revision of the whole work, as appears from a letter written by Graziani to Cardinal Commendone.

As a result, the style of the Catechism is almost

absolutely uniform and closely resembles that of the known works of Pogiani.

Then the theologians had their turn once more. Pius V, who was elected on January 17, 1566, knew the mind of Pius IV with regard to the Catechism, and was animated by at least equal zeal. One of his first acts was to appoint the Papal theologian Manriquez, Eustachius Locatelli, and Cardinal Sirlet to examine every statement in the Catechism from the theological standpoint. No selection could have been wiser. Sirlet was renowned for his learning, and was one of the chief ornaments of the Sacred College. Indeed, Reginaldus states that his two friends, St. Pius V and St. Charles Borromeo, whose professor he had been, did their utmost to have him elected Pope in the preceding Conclave. Eustachius Locatelli, the author of several theological works, had been Vicar-General and Procurator-General of the Dominican Order. At this time he was confessor to St. Pius, who afterwards made him a bishop. Thomas Manriquez, a Spaniard, became Procurator-General of the Dominicans in 1563, and was made Master of the Sacred Palace in 1565. He is well known as a commentator and editor of St. Thomas. Others also, whose names as members of the Commission we have met before, were appointed for the same purpose ; but the three whose names have just been given appear to have had the principal part at this period : " William Sirlet," writes Altamura, " who was illustrious as a Cardinal, and still more as a man of learning, together with the Master of the Sacred Palace, Thomas Manriquez, and Eustachius Locatelli, Procurator of our Order, laboured untiringly at the work of polishing the Catechism, assisted by the advice and judgment of several other men of learning and taste."

It was of this particular commission that St. Pius V says, in his preface to the first edition of the Catechism, " We took care that a Catechism should be composed by several chosen theologians."

The work was soon completed. In July the Pope writes to the Archbishop of Gnesen: "The Catechism is finished and with God's help will shortly be published." In September he writes to Cardinal Hosius that he is sending him a copy. This, however, can have been only an "advance" copy; for in a letter dated October 8, Lombardi informs the same cardinal that the book is not yet in the market. But it was published before the end of the year, under the title *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad Parochos, Pii V Pont. Max. jussu editus*.

The existing division into parts and chapters is not to be found in the earlier editions of the Roman Catechism. Indeed, for some years it was printed with hardly a break in the text beyond the occasional appearance of a paragraph. The Pope, however, did not approve of this arrangement, and soon after the appearance of the work he wrote to Cardinal Hosius directing him to have the book divided into parts, chapters, and paragraphs. The first edition in which this was done would appear to be that prepared by Andreas Fabricius of Munich about the year 1570, and printed at Antwerp in 1587. At all events the preface states that he drew up the questions, which are practically the same as those that have been inserted in most editions ever since.

As regards the *Praxis Catechismi*, adapting its teaching to the Gospels of the year, which finds a place in nearly all editions of the Roman Catechism in its present form, it dates back to an edition (Salodii, 1645) prepared by an Augustinian, Serafino Cruceio. But in the preface he refers the idea to the French editors of an edition that had been published some years earlier at Bordeaux.

It is hardly necessary to remark that the Roman Catechism is a work of exceptional authority. At the very least it has the same authority as a dogmatic encyclical—it is an authoritative exposition of Catholic doctrine given forth, and guaranteed to be orthodox, by the

Catholic Church and her supreme head on earth. The compilation of it was the work of various individuals ; but the result of their combined labours was accepted by the Church as a precious abridgment of dogmatic and moral theology. Official documents have occasionally been issued by Popes to explain certain points of Catholic teaching to individuals or to local Christian communities ; for instance, the letter of Nicholas I to the Emperor Michael, or the decree of Eugenius IV to the Armenians ; whereas the Roman Catechism comprises practically the whole body of Christian Doctrine, and is addressed to the whole Church. Its teaching is not infallible ; but it holds a place between approved Catechisms and what is *de fide*. Hence, ever since the day it was published, innumerable diocesan and provincial synods have sounded its praises and decreed or recommended its adoption. To mention a few out of the many : the five Councils of Milan held under St. Charles Borromeo ; those of Malines, Rouen, Reims, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Avignon, Tours, Aix, Valenza, Valladolid.

As regards pontifical approbation, it will be sufficient to refer to the *Motu Proprio* of Pius V, dated September 24, 1566 ; to the Constitution *In Dominico agro* of Clement XIII, June 14, 1761 ; the *Lettre encyclique au clergé de France*, of Leo XIII, September 8, 1899, which calls it a golden book : “ remarquable à la fois par la richesse et l’exactitude de la doctrine et par l’élégance du style, ce catéchisme est un précieux abrégé de toute la théologie dogmatique et morale. Qui le posséderait au fond aurait toujours à sa disposition les ressources à l’aide desquelles un prêtre peut prêcher avec fruit , s’acquitter dignement de l’importante ministère de la confession et de la direction des âmes, et être en état de réfuter victorieusement les objections des incrédules.”

Contemporaneously with the first edition there was published an Italian version which had been prepared

by the Dominican, Alexis Figliucci, by order of Pius V. It adheres very closely to the original, but being written in cut-and-dry cinquecento Italian, it is anything at all but attractive. It was reprinted five or six years ago at Turin by Marietti. Two other Italian translations appeared about a century ago—those of Andreoli and Brazzaco. The latter (Udine, 1804), which is both readable and correct, has been of considerable help in the preparation of the present translation.

The first French translation, which appeared in 1673, possesses all the merits and all the drawbacks of Figliucci's Italian version. At least three other French translations have since been published—that of Mgr. Doney, in 1828, which is at once too free and marred by the translator's persistent efforts to reproduce the periods of the original ; that of the Abbé Gagey, in 1857, which met with considerable success ; and that of Marbeau and Carpentier (Desclée, Paris, 1905), which, though occasionally rather free, may safely be described as one of the most serviceable editions of the Roman Catechism that has ever appeared. The present version is not a little indebted to it.

A curious English version was printed and published by Dowling, Dublin, in 1816. The name of the translator is not given. The version is very unreliable. It was soon superseded by that of Dr. Donovan of Maynooth, the first edition of which appeared in 1829 (Coyne, Dublin). The style was extremely elegant and readable, but the version was not always faithful, and it was found necessary to submit it to considerable revision, so that the second edition, which was printed and published by the Propaganda Press at Rome in 1839, is more faithful, but far less elegant. It must have been subjected to a third revision, for the translation since published in Ireland under the name of Dr. Donovan bears still further evidence of increased faithfulness, attended by a corresponding diminution in elegance.

If the name of Pius V is intimately bound up with

the story of the production of the Roman Catechism, that of Pius X will be remembered in connexion with its use all over the world as the obligatory text-book of Catechetical Instruction. Not, indeed, that the Encyclical *Acerbo nimis* of April 15, 1905, contains anything that is really new; for as a matter of fact what is laid down therein may be found, at least substantially, in the prescriptions of the Council of Trent, in the constitutions of previous pontiffs, and in the decrees of various diocesan and provincial synods; but simply because of the energetic steps taken to have these regulations permanently and thoroughly carried out in practice.

The substance of the Encyclical is as follows: Having referred to the disorders that afflict present-day society, particularly vice, indifference, and impiety, issuing in neglect of God and of His Divine Law, the Pope traces the cause of all this to widespread ignorance of the truths of religion, adopting as his own the words of Benedict XIV, that "a great part of those who are condemned to eternal torments owe this irreparable misfortune to ignorance of the mysteries of religion which are necessary to be known and believed in order to be saved." He then proceeds to indicate the advantages to be derived from religious instruction, comprising the knowledge of God and of His perfections, man's dignity, and his duties towards God, his neighbour and himself; and he remarks that though a well-instructed Christian may be morally corrupt, there is always hope that he may amend, whereas one who is ignorant of the truths of religion can hardly be saved without a miracle. The duty of dispelling this ignorance and of imparting the necessary knowledge of the principles of faith and morals appertains to the pastor of souls; and accordingly the Holy Father passes on to lay down the rules that are to be followed with regard to catechism classes and preparation for the sacraments, especially First Confession and First Communion; after which he directs

that a catechetical instruction is to be given for adults every Sunday and festival at any hour that is calculated to secure the best attendance, other than that set apart for the catechism class. In carrying out this last injunction the Encyclical directs pastors to use the Catechism of Trent, arranging in such a way as to explain in the course of four or five years the whole subject of the Creed, Sacraments, Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and the Precepts of the Church.

II—THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

The Catechism, as we now know it, is of comparatively recent origin. Previous to the invention of printing, and the consequent possibility of the spread of books and education among the masses of the people, the widespread use of a Catechism was plainly out of the question. Its place was supplied by brief formulæ, not infrequently set to rhyme, which were committed to memory and handed down from generation to generation, conveying a brief statement of the truths more necessary to salvation. The nearest approaches to the modern Catechism would be St. Cyril's *Catechesis*, St. Augustine's *Instruction of the Ignorant*, and, later on, certain works of Alcuin, Rabanus Maurus, and Gerson.

The publication and widespread diffusion of an infinity of Catechisms compiled by Luther and his followers for the purpose of disseminating their new doctrines, stimulated the energies of Catholic writers in a similar direction; and accordingly several Catholic Catechisms were issued within the next few years giving a clear and simple statement of Catholic doctrine, particularly on those points that were being attacked by the reformers. Of these, several of which were prescribed for diocesan use, the principal were those of Erasmus, Witzel, Dietenberg,

Fabri, Titelmann, Hosius, and Blessed Peter Canisius, in Germany ; of Parvi, de Bourbon, du Bellay, de Thou, in France ; of Sonnius, Hessel, and Hunnæus, in the Low Countries ; of Dominic Soto, John of St. Thomas, and Florez, in Spain ; of Bartholomew of the Martyrs and Louis of Granada, in Portugal ; and of Cardinal Contarini, Marini, and Crispoldi, in Italy.

But, as already pointed out, the Fathers of the Council of Trent showed at a very early date that they were satisfied with none of the existing works, and that they were fully alive to the need and necessity of preparing an authoritative Catechism. The realization of their desire, however, was retarded for several years by events over which they had little control ; and when the work was finally taken in hand another idea prevailed, resulting in the publication of a manual for the use of the clergy, and not, as originally suggested, a Catechism for children and uninstructed adults.

Of the countless Catechisms that continued to appear, two—those of Bellarmine and Canisius—have steadily held their ground ever since, and to a large extent have served as the models of nearly all subsequent compilations of the kind. The influence of Canisius, however, has on the whole been limited to Germany ; whereas Bellarmine's Catechism, which was written by command of Pope Clement VIII in 1597, has been copied in almost every other country in the world. At an early date it was translated into Arabic, Latin, Modern Greek, French, Spanish, German, English, and Polish. It had the warm approbation of Clement VIII, who prescribed it for use in the Papal States ; of Urban VIII, who directed it to be adopted in all the Eastern missions ; of Innocent XIII and Benedict XIV ; particularly of the very important Council of all Italy, held at Rome, in 1725, which made it obligatory in all the dioceses of the peninsula ; and finally of the Vatican Council, which indicated it as the model for a proposed universal Catechism.

Though Bellarmine's Catechism was largely followed as a model all over the world, yet, owing to the modifications introduced in diocesan editions, it came to pass in the course of time that almost every diocese had its own Catechism, differing in many respects from the Catechisms of other dioceses.

The obvious inconvenience of this bewildering multiplicity of Catechisms occupied the attention of the Fathers of the Vatican Council, the great majority of whom were agreed as to the desirability of having a uniform small Catechism for the faithful all over the world. Early during the sittings of the Council, forty-one of the assembled Fathers devoted six sessions (February 10 to February 22) to an examination of the question; and the report which they drew up occupied the attention of the whole Council during the sittings of April 29 and 30. The question being put to a vote on May 4, an immense majority was found to be in favour of the compilation of a small uniform Catechism, to be compiled in Latin, translated into every language, and made obligatory in every diocese.¹ But the approach of the Italian troops towards the walls of Rome brought the Council to an untimely end and there was no time to promulgate the constitution on the proposed uniform Catechism, so that it has not the force of law.

The idea, however, has never been lost sight of. During the sitting of the first Catechetical Congress in 1880, the then Bishop of Mantua (now Pius X) proposed that the Holy Father be petitioned to arrange for the compilation of a simple, plain, brief, and popular Catechism for uniform use all over the world. Shortly after his elevation to the Chair of Peter, Pius X at once set about realizing, within certain limits, his own proposal of 1880, by prescribing a uniform Catechism—the Compendium of Christian Doctrine—for use in the dioceses of the ecclesiastical province of Rome, at the same time indicating that it was his earnest desire to have

¹ *Coll. Lac.*, vol. vii., 666, 667.

the same manual adopted all over Italy. The text selected was, with slight modifications, that which had been adopted for some years by the united hierarchy of Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Emilia, and Tuscany. It contains three Catechisms. The first, which is intended for infant schools and for the home, and which covers about thirteen pages, sets forth briefly the more elementary truths of faith, chiefly by way of formulæ to be committed to memory. The second part, called the *Short Catechism*, is intended chiefly for primary schools and for children preparing for the sacraments. It contains about sixty pages devoted to a brief exposition of the doctrine of the Creed, Sacraments, Commandments, and Prayer. The *Larger Catechism*, which forms the third part, explains these at greater length in about 200 pages. It is succeeded by an explanation of the principal feasts of the year, covering sixty pages, followed by forty pages of a Brief History of Religion; and concludes with a certain number of daily prayers, and prayers for special occasions.

III—FATHER RAINERI'S CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTIONS

As regards Father Angelo Raineri, the uneventful story of his quiet life is easily told. Born at Milan in 1761, he made his preliminary studies in the diocesan seminaries of that city, studied theology and canon law with marked success in the famous University of Padua, was ordained priest on Holy Saturday, 1786, was appointed to Milan Cathedral a year or two later, became assistant to the chancellor of the diocese in 1811, and on the death of the latter in 1818 succeeded to his office, which he held, together with the position of curate in the Cathedral, till his death, on the 7th of May, 1840.

Encouraged by his first parish priest, who was not slow to recognize the fine qualities of head and heart with which his young assistant was gifted, Father Raineri during the earlier years of his ministry devoted

much attention to the preparation and preaching of a series of Homilies¹ on the Gospels of the Sundays and Festivals. But though his efforts in this direction were crowned with considerable success, he came to recognize in the course of some years that he could accomplish much greater good by devoting his energies to the work of expounding Christian Doctrine. About the year 1800 he ceased to compose sermons, and for the remainder of his life applied himself to a course of Catechetical Instructions which Sunday after Sunday he delivered to the vast crowds that were attracted from every quarter of the city round his pulpit in the Cathedral of Milan. Each time he repeated the course, which he did every fourth or fifth year, he took care to recast the Instructions, re-studying, correcting, developing, polishing, and re-stating them, so that in their final shape they are the outcome of over forty years' unwearied labour, cheered, however, by the undiminished favour and the visible impression they unfailingly produced. His first editor, who had known him well and had been a witness to their effect on his hearers, observes that it would be a manifest injustice to Raineri to refuse to recognize in his Instructions "soundness of doctrine, accuracy and precision of language, lucidity of thought, orderly arrangement of ideas, appropriate use of Scripture texts, steady flow of eloquence, side by side with the plain, sober, familiar style that pervades his discourses."

As is pointed out by the writer of the notice on his life, prefixed to the first Italian edition, Father Raineri did not rest satisfied with a mere exposition of Catholic doctrine and practice. He invariably devoted the conclusion of each instruction to the practical application of some moral principle, the driving home of some shining Scriptural example, some touching fact or view arising out of the subject of his discourse; so much so, indeed, that it would almost seem as if Pope Pius X had

¹ Published after his death by one of his friends. Some years later they appeared in French under the title of *Homélies sur les Evangiles des Dimanches et Instructions sur divers sujets* (Paris: Welzer, 1870).

him in mind when he pointed out that, having explained some particular truth of faith or morals in all its parts, the catechist will at once proceed "to draw a comparison between what God commands and what men really do ; then, by means of suitable examples prudently selected from Holy Writ, Ecclesiastical History, and the Lives of the Saints, he will bring home to the minds of his hearers, and, so to say, point out with his finger, how they should regulate their life and conduct, concluding by an exhortation calculated to make them detest and avoid sin and practise virtue."

Though earnestly requested over and over again, he would never consent to publish his Instructions. But as his manuscripts were found to be in almost perfect order after his death, his friends were able to save them from oblivion and enshrine them in a durable monument of usefulness by having them printed and published. How much they were justified may be estimated from the fact that after going through six editions in its original Italian dress, the work still holds the field as one of the most popular courses of instruction in the Italian language. As an instance of this it will be enough to remark that when at the dawn of the present century the Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan proceeded to a revival of earnest, thorough, practical Catechetical Instruction, and desired that as regards method the illustrious traditions of St. Charles Borromeo should be followed as nearly as possible, the priests of the diocese, at once selecting Father Raineri as their best model, brought out a sixth edition of his *Corso di Istruzioni Catechistiche*, a step to which the Cardinal gave his hearty approval.

At an early date after the appearance of the first Italian edition it was translated into French, and possibly there is no work of the kind that has had so many translations and has been so extensively used by the French-speaking clergy down to the present day. "Several translations and numerous reprints have made

Raineri's Familiar Instructions the obligatory manual of the catechist among us," remarks one of the latest translators (Canon Fourot, of Saint-Dixier) in his preface (fifth edition). Two other independent French translations are known to me—that of d'Hauterive and that of Charbonnier, which has long ago reached a tenth edition and has been incorporated in the great series of *Predication Contemporaine*. It would appear, however, from Fourot that there were other French translations besides those mentioned. Referring to this particular fact, the writer of a careful review of the present work (in *Catholic University Bulletin* of Washington) remarks that "their continued survival in a field so crowded with competitors should be their best recommendation."

PREFATORY CHAPTER

ON THE PASTORAL OFFICE AND ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

THE ROMAN CATECHISM

1.—The necessity
of revelation.

By force of much labour and application man can of himself investigate and discover a great number of truths pertaining to religion; but such is the nature of his mind and intelligence that had he to depend on his natural lights alone, he never could have discovered or known most of the means that lead to eternal salvation, the principal end for which he has been created and formed to the image and likeness of God.

Doubtless, as the Apostle teaches, *the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*; (such as) *His eternal power also, and His divinity*; ¹ but *the mystery, which hath been hidden from ages and generations, so far transcends man's understanding that unless it had been manifested by God to His saints, to whom He willed to make known by the gift of faith the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ, no effort of the understanding could ever have succeeded in reaching so sublime a knowledge.*

I.—NECESSITY OF AUTHORIZED TEACHERS

2.—Faith comes
by hearing.

But as *faith cometh by hearing*,² it is easy to see how necessary towards the attainment of eternal salvation has been the faithful co-operation and ministry of a duly authorized teacher; for it is written: *How shall they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach unless they be sent?*³

From the very beginning God, who is infinitely good and merciful, has never failed His own, but *at sundry times and in divers manners spoke to the fathers by the prophets*; ⁴ and, according

¹ Rom. i. 20.

² Rom. x. 17.

³ Rom. x. 14, 15.

⁴ Heb. i. 1.

as time and circumstance required, He pointed out to them the sure and straight path that leads to the happiness of heaven.

But as He had foretold that He would send a teacher of justice *to be the light of the gentiles*,¹ that His salvation might reach *even to the uttermost ends of the earth*, so in these days hath He spoken to us by His Son,² whose teaching, by a voice coming down from the excellent glory,³ heaven, He ordered us all to hear and obey. And this same Son in His turn gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and others pastors and teachers⁴ to announce the word of life, so that henceforth we be *no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine*,⁵ but that resting secure on the firm foundations of the faith *we may be built together into an habitation of God in the Holy Ghost*.⁶

II.—AUTHORITY AND FUNCTIONS OF PASTORS

Lest anyone on hearing the word of God announced by the pastors of the Church, should be tempted to take it as the word of man, and not, as it really is, the word of Christ, the same Saviour attached such great authority to their teaching that He said: *He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me*⁷—a declaration intended to apply not only to those whom He was then addressing, but also to all those who by legitimate succession were to receive the office of teaching; and to all these He promised that He would *be with them all days, even to the consummation of the world*.⁸

But though at no time was the preaching of the word of God to be set aside in the Church, yet there never has been a time in which it was so necessary to labour with greater zeal and devotion to nourish and strengthen the faithful with the vivifying bread of sound and wholesome doctrine, as the times in which we live. For *false prophets have gone out into the world*; ⁹ they have gone to corrupt the minds of the faithful *with various and strange doctrines*.¹⁰ Of prophets such as these the Lord has said: *I did not send prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied*.¹¹ And the impiety of these men, armed as it

¹ Is. xlix. 6.

⁵ Eph. iv. 14.

⁹ 1 John iv. 1.

² Heb. i. 2.

⁶ Eph. ii. 22.

¹⁰ Heb. xiii. 9.

³ 2 Peter i. 17.

⁷ Luke x. 16.

¹¹ Jer. xxiii. 21.

⁴ Eph. iv. 11.

⁸ Matt. xxviii. 20

is with all the arts of Satan, has made such progress that it would seem almost impossible to check its course ; indeed, did we not rely on the memorable promise of our Saviour, who declared that He had built His Church on so sure a foundation that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*,¹ we should have good reason to fear that it would succumb under the attacks of the many enemies now besieging it and bringing every art to bear against it.

Thus,—not to mention the noble provinces which up to this had piously and devoutly preserved the true Catholic faith as handed down from their ancestors, and which have now gone astray from the right path into error, loudly proclaiming that they truly show they value genuine religion by the fact that they have completely abandoned the teaching of their forefathers,—there is no region so remote, no place so secure, no corner of the world so inaccessible, into which this pestilential error has not tried to creep.

As soon as those who had conceived the design of corrupting the minds of the faithful saw that it was utterly impossible for them to hope to be able to hold personal intercourse with all, or to pour their poisoned words into the ears of all, they adopted another plan to effect their purpose, and were thus able to disseminate their impious errors more easily and on a much larger scale. In addition to the voluminous works by which they sought to destroy the Catholic Faith,—volumes not difficult to forestall with a certain amount of labour and care, because of the evident heresy they contained—they also composed an infinity of small works, which under the specious semblance of apparent piety succeeded only too readily in imposing on the good faith of simple souls.

III.—NECESSITY OF AN AUTHORITATIVE CATHOLIC CATECHISM

Hence it was that the Fathers of the Council of Trent, ardently desirous of applying an efficacious remedy to so widespread and pernicious an evil, did not rest content with defining the more important points of Catholic doctrine against the heresies of the day, but furthermore deemed it desirable to issue, for the instruction of

¹ Matt. xvi. 18.

the faithful in the very rudiments of the faith, a form and method to be followed in all churches by those holding the position of legitimate pastors and teachers.

8.—An authoritative Catechism. Several, it is true, had already devoted their attention to writings of this kind with great devotion and learning; yet the Fathers deemed it of the utmost importance that there should be published with the authority of the Council a book wherein pastors and all others on whom is incumbent the duty of imparting instruction could find reliable material for the edification of the faithful; that as there is but *one Lord and one faith*, so also should there be but one and the same prescribed standard by which to expound the faith and instruct the faithful in all the obligations of Christian piety.

9.—The limitations of the Catechism. The truths connected with a design of this kind being very numerous, it could not be expected that it was the intention of the Council to explain in a single volume and in a detailed manner all the dogmas of the Christian Faith,—this is the business of theologians, who professedly undertake to expound religious teaching in all its comprehensiveness. Such a task would be one of almost endless labour, and in any event would but ill correspond to the end in view. But having simply undertaken to furnish pastors and those having care of souls with a knowledge of those things that more closely concern the pastoral office, and are at the same time suited to the capacity of the faithful, it was the wish of the Council that only such matters should be set forth as are calculated to assist the pious zeal of those pastors who might not perhaps be sufficiently versed in the more difficult points of divine science.

But before proceeding to explain in detail the various points comprised in this summary of Christian doctrine, our plan requires that we should here make a few observations which the pastor should carefully bear in mind and never lose sight of, so that he may have a clear idea of the end to which all his thoughts, aspirations, and efforts are to be directed, and by what means the desired results may be more readily obtained and secured.

IV.—THE METHOD OF IMPARTING INSTRUCTION

10.—Preliminary reflection. (a) His first care should be ever to remember that all Christian knowledge is reduced to one single head, or, to use our Saviour's words, that *this is life everlasting, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*¹ And consequently the pastor's principal efforts will be directed towards inspiring the faithful with an earnest desire to *know Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,*² and towards firmly convincing them and impressing deeply on their souls the strong, fervent and constant belief that *there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved ;*³ since, *He is the propitiation for our sins.*⁴

(b) But as *in this we truly know that we have known Him,*⁵ if we keep His commandments, a second consideration, intimately connected with that indicated just now, is that the pastor should let the faithful see that their lives must not be spent in ease and idleness, but that we ought to *walk even as He walked*⁶ and earnestly *pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, mildness,*⁷ remembering that *He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people acceptable, pursuing good works.*⁸ Such are the things the Apostle directs pastors to *speak and exhort.*⁹

(c) Our Lord and Saviour has not only declared, but has also shown by His own example that *the Law and the Prophets depend on love* ; and after Him the Apostle has formally taught that *charity is the end of the commandment*¹⁰ and the fulfilment of the Law. And consequently it is unquestionably a primary duty of the pastor to labour with all his zeal to excite the faithful to a love of God's infinite goodness towards us, so that inflamed with divine ardour they may be lifted up towards that supreme and all-perfect good, the possession of which constitutes true and solid happiness, as will be clearly experienced by him who can say with the Prophet: *What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire on earth?*¹¹ Such, in truth, is that *more excellent way* indicated by the Apostle, when he sums up all his teaching and instructions in the one word *charity, which never falleth away.*¹² In all things, then, that the pastor may propose to the faithful, be they considerations of faith, or of hope, or of some virtue of practical life, he should always so strongly recommend love of our Lord, that each one may clearly comprehend that all the

¹ John xvii. 3.

² 1 Cor. ii. 2.

³ Acts iv. 12.

⁴ 1 John ii. 3.

⁵ 1 John ii. 3.

⁶ 1 John ii. 6.

⁷ 1 Tim. vi. 11.

⁸ Titus ii. 14.

⁹ Titus ii. 15.

¹⁰ 1 Tim. i. 5.

¹¹ Ps. lxxii. 25.

¹² 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

works of virtue and Christian perfection can have no other origin and no other end than charity.

(d) Since, in imparting instruction of any sort, a suitable method is of the highest importance, so in the instruction of the Christian people it deserves the closest attention. Hence account must be taken of the age, capacity, habits, and condition of one's hearers, so that he who teaches may become *all things to all men* to gain all to Christ, and thus prove himself to be a faithful minister and steward, and, like a good and faithful servant, be found worthy to be *placed over many things* by his Lord.

Let him not imagine that all those entrusted to his care are on the same level, and consequently that he can follow one uniform and unvarying method in his efforts to instruct the faithful and form them to true piety. Some are *as new-born infants*;¹ others are growing up in Christ; while others are, so to say, in full maturity; and hence he must carefully distinguish those who need milk from those needing more solid food, and thus to be able to give to each such food as will afford spiritual increase, *until we all meet in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ.*²

The Apostle indicated himself as an example for all when he said that he was *a debtor to the Greek and the barbarian, to the wise and the unwise*,³ thus showing all those who are called to the ministry of instruction that in expounding the mysteries of faith and the precepts of right conduct, they should accommodate their words to the capacity and intelligence of their hearers, and that while nourishing the minds of the strong with spiritual food they must also take care not to allow the little ones to perish with hunger for want of that bread, which they cry out for, but *there is none to break it to them.*⁴

(e) Furthermore, no one should allow his zeal in instruction to relax because he must sometimes descend to details that seem elementary and unimportant, and even irksome to minds habitually accustomed to the contemplation of more elevated thoughts. If the Wisdom of the Eternal Father deigned to come on earth and in the lowliness of our flesh to teach us the truths of heavenly life, who is there whom *the charity of Christ urgeth* not to become as a little one in the midst of his brethren and like unto a mother cherishing her children? or who is there who

¹ 1 Peter ii. 2.

² Eph. iv. 13.

³ Rom. i. 14.

⁴ Lament. iv. 4.

will not so anxiously desire the salvation of his neighbour that, as the Apostle testifies of himself, he will not be ready to give them not only the Gospel of God but even his own life ?

12.—God's word to be found in Scripture and Tradition. Now all the truths to be taught to the faithful are contained in the Word of God, that is to say, in Scripture and tradition ; and consequently the pastor will devote his days and nights to the study of these, ever mindful of the admonition addressed by St. Paul to Timothy, which ought to be taken to heart by all those who have the care of souls : *Attend to reading, to exhortation and to doctrine ;*¹ for, *all Scripture divinely inspired is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the name of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work.*²

V.—THE PARTS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

13.—Traditional division into four parts. The truths which God has revealed are so many and various that it is no easy task to acquire a knowledge of them, or, having done so, to retain them all so distinctly in the memory as to be able when occasion arises to enter into a prompt and satisfactory exposition of them. Hence it is that our predecessors in the faith have very wisely reduced the whole compass of the science of salvation to four heads—the Apostle's Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer.

I. Thus all that is to form the object of the Christian faith, whether it concerns the knowledge of God, or the creation and government of the world, or the redemption of the human race, or the rewards promised to the good, or the punishments that await the wicked—all is contained in the *Creed*.

II. As regards the signs and, so to say, instruments given us to procure divine grace, they are comprised in the teaching on the *Seven Sacraments*.

III. All that concerns the Law, whose *end is Charity*, is found described in the *Decalogue*.

IV. And, finally, all that we can desire, hope or devoutly pray for, is contained in the *Lord's Prayer*.

Hence it follows that if these four parts, which are, so to say, the common topics of Sacred Scripture, were once explained, there would remain hardly anything more that the Christian is bound to learn.

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 13. ² 2 Tim. xiii. 16.

14.—Combination
of Catechetical
instruction and
Gospel homily.

Accordingly, the pastor will bear in mind that whenever it comes in his way to explain a passage of the Gospel or any other part of Sacred Scripture, he will always be able to find its subject-matter discussed under some one of these four heads, which he will accordingly utilize as the source of his discourse.

If, for instance, he has to expound the Gospel of the first Sunday of Advent: *There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon*, etc.,¹ he will find everything relating thereto under the article "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead"; and drawing on this, he will at one and the same time impart to his flock a knowledge of both Creed and Gospel. In all his instructions and homilies, therefore, the pastor will make it his practice ever to keep in view these four principal heads under which, as has been observed, the whole body of Christian doctrine is comprised. As for the best method, he is free to follow that which he deems best suited to the circumstances of person and time.

THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

PRELIMINARY LESSON

ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND ITS PRINCIPAL PARTS

Q. Are you a Christian ?

A. Yes, I am a Christian, by the grace of God.

Q. Why do you say : By the grace of God ?

A. I say : By the grace of God, because to be a Christian is a perfectly gratuitous gift of God, which we ourselves could not have merited.

Q. Who is a true Christian ?

A. A true Christian is he who is baptized, who believes and professes the Christian Doctrine, and obeys the lawful pastors of the Church.

Q. What is Christian Doctrine ?

A. Christian doctrine is the doctrine which Jesus Christ our Lord taught us to show us the way of salvation.

Q. Is it necessary to learn the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ ?

A. It certainly is necessary to learn the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ, and those who fail to do so are guilty of a grave breach of duty.

Q. Are parents and guardians bound to send their children and those dependent on them to Catechism ?

A. Parents and guardians are bound to see that their children and dependents learn Christian Doctrine, and they are guilty before God if they neglect this duty.

Q. From whom are we to receive and learn Christian Doctrine ?

A. We are to receive and learn Christian Doctrine from the Holy Catholic Church.

Q. How are we certain that the Christian Doctrine which we receive from the Holy Catholic Church is really true ?

A. We are certain that the doctrine which we receive from the Holy Catholic Church is true, because Jesus Christ, the divine Author of this doctrine, committed it through His Apostles to the Church, which He founded and made the infallible teacher of all men, promising her His divine assistance until the end of time.

Q. Are there other proofs of the truth of Christian Doctrine ?

A. The truth of Christian Doctrine is also shown by the eminent sanctity of numbers who have professed it and who still profess it, by the heroic fortitude of the martyrs, by its marvellous and rapid propagation in the world, and by its perfect preservation throughout so many centuries of ceaseless and varied struggles.

Q. What and how many are the principal and most necessary parts of Christian Doctrine ?

A. The principal and most necessary parts of Christian Doctrine are four : *The Creed, the Our Father, the Commandments, and the Sacraments.*

Q. What does the *Creed* teach us ?

A. The *Creed* teaches us the principal articles of our holy faith,

Q. What does the *Our Father* teach us ?

A. The *Our Father* teaches us all that we are to hope from God, and all we are to ask of Him.

Q. What do the Commandments teach us ?

A. The Commandments teach us all that we are to do to please God—all of which is summed up in loving God above all things and our

neighbour as ourselves for the love of God.

Q. What does the doctrine of the Sacraments teach us ?

A. The doctrine of the Sacraments shows us the nature and right use of those means which Jesus Christ has instituted to remit our sins, give us His grace, infuse into and increase in us the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

Preliminary Instruction

ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, as the name implies, is simply an abridgment, a summary, a *résumé*, of all the truths taught by our Lord Jesus Christ.

To understand what this means, we must presuppose that of the many religions in the world there is only one true religion, really honouring God as He wishes to be honoured. But, as we could not come to a knowledge of this one true religion by the unaided light of nature, God alone could make known to us the worship He requires of us,—and God has not failed to discharge this debt of Providence. From the beginning of the world and down through the ages, He has deigned to reveal to us that body of doctrine, that system of religion, by which we are to give Him the honour due to Him. But, as St. Paul remarks, He has done this in different ways. First, He spoke to the Jewish people through Moses and the other prophets, whom He sent from time to time, and who were divinely inspired by Him : *God spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets* ;¹ but in later times He has deigned to speak to us by the mouth of His divine Son, who became man and dwelt amongst us : *In these days He hath spoken to us by His Son*.

Yes, Jesus Christ, says the Council of Trent, came down from heaven not only to redeem us, but also to give us His teaching, to which we should lend an attentive ear. He could not even be our Redeemer without instructing us ; for as our Redeemer He had to repair sin and the consequences of sin ; and the least of these is certainly not a profound ignorance of the most essential truths. This ignorance had to be dispelled by the light of His heavenly doctrine.

A Teacher the Eternal Father declared Him to be the day of the Transfiguration on Mount Thabor when, surrounding Him with majesty and glory, He commanded all men to lend an attentive ear to His teaching : *This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased—hear ye Him*.² And such in fact was the occupation of Jesus Christ

¹ Heb. i. 1.

² Matt. xvii. 5.

during the last three years of His life, which He spent preaching in the squares, in the temple, in the synagogue, travelling from city to city from village to village, as the Gospel relates. And then, when about to leave the world, He founded His Church to which He gave Apostles, Evangelists, and teachers, who by His authority were to continue His teaching, faithfully transmitting to His followers the teaching which they had received from Him.

These are certain and incontestable truths which for the moment must be presupposed, but which shall be demonstrated in the proper time and place.

I. From these truths the conclusion may be drawn that Christian Doctrine recognizes Jesus Christ as its Author, or, in other words, that it is His doctrine. He is our one Teacher—the others are simply the instruments which He makes use of to reach us.

The *object* of this teaching is to make known to us the sublime end for which we have been created, and to indicate to us the means necessary to attain it.

Regarding that *end*, it teaches us that in God alone can we find true and solid happiness ; that He alone is the infinite good capable of contenting us ; that we are made for Him and destined to possess Him and enjoy Him for all eternity.

As regards those *means*, it teaches us that we are given the present time to acquire heaven ; and that the one indispensable means of acquiring it is by uniting ourselves to God here on earth by the practice of Faith, Hope, and Charity—with humble submission of soul, believing all the truths which it has pleased Him to reveal to us ; hoping in His goodness and asking Him with confidence for the blessings which He has promised us ; finally, loving Him with our whole heart, and faithfully observing His holy law. In these three consist that justice and holiness which will lead us to eternal salvation. But this justice, this holiness, we cannot procure of ourselves : it is a gift of God who has mercifully given it to us through the merits of Jesus Christ which are applied to our souls by the sacraments and prayer.

Here, then, we have the four principal parts into which Christian Doctrine is usually divided :—

The first comprises the mysteries and truths which we are to believe by *Faith*, and which are contained in the Apostles' Creed, commonly called the *Creed*.

The second considers the blessings which we are to expect by *Hope* and ask for in prayer. They are contained in the *Lord's Prayer*.

The third teaches us the precepts which we are to fulfil by charity,

and which are comprised in the *Commandments* of God and of His Church.

The fourth is concerned with the *Sacraments* to be received as the means instituted by God to pour into our souls the supernatural habits of faith, hope, and charity ; they are also the channels by which grace comes to us if we have not yet had it, is increased in us if we already possess it, and is recovered should we have lost it.

II. From these few considerations each one can easily see the excellence and importance of Christian Doctrine ; for we have only to consider its object, which is the science of salvation and of life eternal : *One thing is necessary.*

If it is important to learn thoroughly, and perfect ourselves in, all that concerns our particular profession or trade—be we lawyers, medical men, business men, or artisans—how much more important is it for us to learn thoroughly the noblest of all professions, that which is common to all men, and to which all other professions are subordinate ? Of what use is it to have a profound knowledge of all the rest, if we have not first learned to be Christians, and to live a Christian life ?

Truly worthy of pity are those who apply themselves with all the powers of their soul to the various branches of human knowledge, yet who, notwithstanding all their knowledge, display a shameful ignorance of all that concerns religion and Christianity ! We are far from condemning other studies ; but what we do condemn and deplore is, that the science of the most necessary truths, the science of virtue and salvation, is placed behind all the others and so neglected that it is not rare to find the poorest labourer or servant or artisan much better instructed in religion than many a man who enjoys a world-wide fame for learning !

This consideration should suffice to make us conscious of the superiority of the science of salvation and the preference we should give to it. Nor must we imagine that it is too simple to merit serious attention. We must not imagine that because we know the *Creed*, the *Our Father*, the *Decalogue* and the number of the *Sacraments*, nothing more is required of us. It is not enough to know the words—we must also have a sufficient understanding of their meaning. True, all our religion is comprised in these three or four forms, but not in a sufficiently clear way, nor can it become so without labour and study to develop it and explain all that is summed up and abridged in these brief formulæ.

It is not enough, then, to know how to repeat the *Creed* : we must

also enter into the spirit and substance of each article, if we desire to form a just idea of what God is in Himself and in His adorable perfections ; of what He is in our regard as Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier ; and finally of what He will one day be as the distributor of rewards or punishments. The more these truths are known thoroughly, the more will they be appreciated and loved ; whereas the ignorant blaspheme and deride what they do not know : *They blaspheme all that they do not know*, says the Apostle St. Jude.

It is the same way with regard to the *Decalogue*—each precept is expressed in a few words : I am the Lord thy God—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain—Thou shalt not steal—Thou shalt not bear false witness. But underneath these few brief words, how many duties are prescribed and how many faults forbidden ! To practise the law we must have a sufficient knowledge of it. If people but knew the multiplicity of duties enjoined by each commandment, as well as the multiplicity of corresponding transgressions, confessions would not be so barren, dry, and imperfect as they often are. Penitents often seem at a loss for something to accuse themselves of, whereas there is only too much, so that they seem to experience famine in the midst of abundance !

It avails but little to know how to repeat the *Our Father* if we do not grasp the meaning of those sublime petitions which Jesus Christ puts on our lips—petitions which contain a treasure of instruction, and which, if but understood, would enlighten the intellect and enkindle in the heart the flames of divine love.

Finally, as regards the *Sacraments*, we must, if we do not wish to profane them, thoroughly grasp both the nature of the effects they produce and the quality of the dispositions which they demand in us. To take but one example : Can there be formed a feebler, falser or stranger idea than that which people so often display with regard to the most frequented and most necessary sacrament of our reconciliation with God, that is to say, Confession ? Is it anything more in the eyes of many than a mere formality, in which the heart and the affections have no part and which never produces the least change in life or habits ?

In brief, the short catechism which is taught to infants supplies instruction sufficient for their age ; but in adults something more is required. The first rudiments are like seed which is consigned to the ground, not to remain always in the same state, but to grow up, develop, and come to full maturity. In the same way, as our judgment advances with years, so should we advance in the knowledge

of the truths of religion, and not be so ready to flatter ourselves that we know enough about them.

Yet, in practice, the very contrary has often to be deplored. Numbers of adults are ashamed to frequent religious instruction, and regard this occupation as childish or fit only for children ; and thus they come at length to forget even the simple rudiments which are instilled into their minds in childhood, and to lose all idea of religion.

Only too often do we find among Christians a profound ignorance of the things of God. Not a few of them are utterly careless about matters of religion. Though perfectly instructed in all that concerns their temporal interests and the affairs of the world, they are complete blanks with regard to even the most important mysteries of our faith as well as the gravest and most essential obligations. They do not know how to make the acts of faith, hope, and charity which are so essential to a Christian ; they do not know the meaning of the Mass, nor of the Incarnation, nor of the grace of Jesus Christ, nor of the Redemption ; they are ignorant of the malice and filthiness of sin, as well as of the means of obtaining pardon of it. Then they contract marriage and become the heads of a family without the faintest trace of Christianity. And often they preserve this culpable ignorance down to the very last hour of life, and those precious moments, that should be employed in something quite different, must be devoted by the priest to trying to instruct them in the very rudiments of faith.

It is not rare in these days to hear parents lament the wicked ways of their children ; but very often they have only themselves to blame for having let them grow up in ignorance, without giving them that Christian training to which they have every right. Once they arrive at the age when the passions begin to develop and when bad example and evil companionship exercise so great an influence over their young minds, it is useless to speak to them of catechisms and instructions and Christian Doctrine. At such a time they have a positive interest in remaining away from all these things—they have a horror of all that can interfere with them in the career of vice on which they have embarked. Thus the ignorance, which at first was a misfortune attributable to their parents, becomes in course of time voluntary, malicious, systematic, and deliberate. Such is the baneful, irreparable consequence of neglect in this respect on the part of parents.

Another universal subject of general complaint is the fearful multiplication of dangerous characters troubling the public peace and tranquillity—sharpers, thieves, assassins, evil-doers of every species. But

how could it be otherwise? For the most part these individuals have no other idea, know no other need, are conscious of no other interest than those of the present life—they are without religious principles, without the rules of right conduct, without remorse of conscience. Under these circumstances each one can readily understand how insensible they become to human laws, and how indifferent to the penalties laid down by law against delinquents—provided they hope to evade the arm of the law, there is no crime, no atrocity which they are not ready to commit, laughing at law, prison, and even the scaffold itself.

Indeed, in Sacred Scripture the Holy Ghost attributes to ignorance of things spiritual and divine that frightful deluge of vice and wickedness that inundated the earth: *There is no knowledge of God in the land*, He says through the mouth of the prophet Osee; and behold the consequence: *Cursing and lying and killing and adultery have overflowed*.¹ The intellect may, indeed, be enlightened and the will perverse, the morals corrupt; but the will can never be right, nor the morals pure if the intellect is blind. One whose eyes are keen and open may, indeed, go astray; but one who is blind cannot but go astray. Moreover, there is this great difference between the two—depraved morals when found side by side with an enlightened and instructed mind always leave room for hope of change and repentance; but if corruption is accompanied by ignorance the evil is almost irremediable.

All these reflections should suffice to convince us of the importance and necessity of being thoroughly instructed in the things pertaining to religion, to the soul, and to salvation.

As for the young, let them diligently cultivate the studies on which they are engaged; but let them never neglect the study of religion which is that of true wisdom, nor be ashamed of it as if it were something trivial and contemptible. As our divine religion fears nothing so much as being imperfectly known, so if carefully grasped it will be a preservative against the incredulity of the age as well as a rampart against vice,—it will sanctify their studies and will make them redound to their true edification.

As for the illiterate, let them be careful to assist diligently at instructions in Christian Doctrine. Those who know how to read can derive instruction from a book; but for the illiterate, the only way they can come to a knowledge of Christian Doctrine is by hearing it expounded. The obligation of doing so is of the very gravest—indeed

it may be so great that the obligation is graver even than that binding them to hear Mass on Sundays.

As for the heads of houses, let them bear in mind that one of the duties of their state is to be the principal instructors and first teachers of those under them. But how teach others that which they do not know themselves? Let them, therefore, be instructed so as to be able to instruct. Worst of all, were they not only to neglect their duty in this respect, but to omit to send their children to catechism, since they would thus deprive them of the spiritual nourishment which others would gladly impart to them. This remark applies to servants, no less than to children, of a household; for servants are also under the charge of the heads of houses, and the latter should regulate the hours of labour in such a way as to give them time to attend religious instruction in God's house, if circumstances do not permit their being instructed at home.

In conclusion, all in general will do well to assist frequently at religious instruction. If we attach any value at all to that incomparable grace which God has shown us by choosing us from among so many others to admit us into the bosom of His Church and render us capable of eternal bliss, we should not allow it to become fruitless through our own fault. This would eventually redound only to our eternal damnation. Let us, then, co-operate actively in the loving designs of God in our regard; and as we cannot do this unless we know all that He demands of us in matters of faith and morals, let our first co-operation in His designs be a living love, an ardent desire, a holy avidity to learn and be enlightened ever more and more in the ways of salvation, making ready and willing use of that means which God in His bountiful goodness offers us in the bosom of His Church.

THE CREED

CHAPTER I

THE CREED IN GENERAL

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

IN their labours to lead souls to a knowledge of
1.—Meaning of the Jesus Christ and of His teaching, the Fathers
word Faith. invariably began with faith. Following their
example, we deem it advisable to give first place to an exposition
of the various truths comprised under this virtue:

Though the word faith has many meanings in Sacred Scripture, we here take it to mean that virtue by which we give a full and complete assent to all the truths revealed by God.

That such faith is necessary to salvation, no one can reasonably doubt, since it is written : *Without faith it is impossible to please God.*¹ For as the end proposed to constitute man's happiness is far above the reach of human understanding, it necessarily follows that the knowledge thereof should come from God. Now, this knowledge is nothing else than faith, by virtue of which we unhesitatingly hold as certain whatever the authority of Our Holy Mother the Church proposes to us as having been revealed by God ; and no faithful soul can entertain any doubt about those truths of which God, who is truth itself, is the author.

From this we may estimate how great is the difference between the faith which we have in God, and that which we give to writers of human history.

And though this faith has various meanings and differs in degree and excellence (for we read in Holy Writ : *O thou of little faith, why dost thou doubt?*² and : *Great is thy faith;*³ and :

¹ Heb. xi. 6.

² Matt. xiv. 31.

³ Matt. xv. 28.

Increase our faith,¹ and : *Faith without works is dead*;² and : *Faith worketh by charity*³), it is yet the same in kind ; and the same definition applies equally to all its various grades. How fruitful it is, and how advantageous to us, will appear in the explanation of each of the articles of the Creed.

I.—ON THE CREED

2.—Why the Twelve Articles of the Creed were drawn up. Now, the chief truths which every Christian ought to know and believe are those which the holy Apostles, our teachers and guides in the faith, inspired by the spirit of God, have arranged in the twelve articles of the Creed. Having received from our Lord the command to go forth into the *whole world* as His ambassadors,⁴ and *preach the Gospel to every creature*,⁵ they deemed it advisable to draw up a formula of Christian faith, so as to enable all to believe and profess the same truths, and to secure that amongst those called by them to the unity of faith there should be no schisms, but that all should be *perfect in the same mind, and the same judgment*.⁶

3.—Why called a Symbol. This profession of Christian faith and hope, which they had composed, the Apostles called a “symbol,” either because it was made up of various sentences, each of which was contributed by an Apostle, or because it was to be used as a sign or password by which they might easily distinguish *false brethren who had fallen away* from the faith, or had been *unawares brought in*,⁷ and had adulterated the *word of God*, from those who had bound themselves by vow of fidelity to serve under the banner of Christ.

II.—THE ARTICLES OF THE CREED

4.—The parts of the Creed. The truths of the Christian religion which, either separately or in general, are to be held by sure and certain faith are many ; but the first and most necessary to be believed,—that which is the foundation and summary of all truth, and which God Himself has deigned to teach us,—is that concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence, the distinction of the Three Persons, and the diversity

¹ Luke xvii. 5.

² James ii. 20.

³ Gal. v. 6.

⁴ Matt. xxviii. 19.

⁵ Mark xvi. 15.

⁶ 1 Cor. i. 10.

⁷ Gal. ii. 4.

of the operations specially attributed to each. Now, it will be the pastor's business to show that the doctrine of this mystery is briefly contained in the Apostles' Creed.

For, as has been observed by those who lived before us, and who treated of this subject with great care and piety, the Creed seems to be divided into three principal parts—the first, devoted to the First Person and the wondrous work of creation ; the second, to the Second Person and the mystery of man's redemption ; and the third, to the Third Person, the principle and source of our sanctification ; the whole being comprised in distinct yet closely connected propositions—propositions which, after a comparison frequently made use of by the Fathers, are called *articles* ; for as in the members of the body there are various distinct *articulations*, so also in this profession of faith, each truth which we are to believe separately and distinctly is fitly and properly called an article.

THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

THE SYMBOL OF THE APOSTLES, COMMONLY CALLED THE
*CREED*THE *CREED* IN GENERAL

Q. What is the first part of Christian Doctrine ?

A. The first part of Christian Doctrine is the Symbol of the Apostles, commonly called the *Creed*.

Q. Why do you call the *Creed* the Symbol of the Apostles ?

A. The *Creed* is called the Symbol of the Apostles because it is a summary of the truths of faith taught by the Apostles.

Q. How many articles are there in the *Creed* ?

A. There are twelve articles in the *Creed*.

Q. Recite them.

A. 1. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ;

2. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord ;

3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost ; born of the Virgin Mary ;

4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate : was crucified, dead, and buried ;

5. He descended into hell : the third day He rose again from the dead ;

6. He ascended into Heaven : sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ;

7. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

8. I believe in the Holy Ghost ;

9. The Holy Catholic Church ; the Communion of Saints ;

10. The forgiveness of sins ;

11. The resurrection of the body ;

12. Life everlasting. Amen.

Q. What is meant by the word : *I believe*, which you say at the beginning of the Symbol ?

A. The word : *I believe*, means I hold everything that is contained in these twelve articles to be perfectly true ; and I believe these truths more firmly than if I saw them with my eyes, because God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed them to the Holy Catholic Church and through this Church to us.

Q. What do the articles of the *Creed* contain ?

A. The articles of the *Creed* contain the principal truths to be believed concerning God, Jesus Christ, and the Church, His Spouse.

Q. Is it useful to recite the *Creed* frequently ?

A. It is most useful to recite the *Creed* frequently, so as to impress the truths of faith more and more deeply on our hearts.

First Instruction on the Creed

THE CREED IN GENERAL

BEFORE entering, on a detailed examination of the different articles of the Apostles' Creed, it will be useful to bear in mind a few general observations, to which, accordingly, we shall devote the present instruction.

The Creed is a brief summary of the more essential truths which God has revealed to His Church. Many, indeed, are the truths which God has revealed ; but though we must believe all these implicitly, without one single exception, it is not necessary to know them all explicitly and distinctly—a knowledge of the primary and fundamental truths suffices.

It was but fitting, then, that these fundamental truths should be collected into a brief summary, which would serve as a rule and guide for all Christians, and which, in its brevity and simplicity, would be adapted to the capacity of the humblest and most ignorant. Now, such a summary we have in the Creed, which comprises, in a few words, all the truths necessary to be believed. It treats principally of two things—God and His Church. That treating of God is divided into three parts, having reference to the Persons of the Blessed Trinity—the Father and the work of Creation ; the Son and the work of Redemption ; the Holy Ghost and the work of our Sanctification.

The other part, which concerns the Church, sets forth the marks that distinguish the true Church of Christ from every other Church ; and, along with this, the blessings we derive from being members of that Church. And here it is necessary to bear well in mind that although the truths revealed by God are not all expressly set forth in the Creed, we, nevertheless, implicitly accept them all by the fact of our faith in the Church, the truth and authority of which we acknowledge when we say in the ninth article : *I believe in the Holy Catholic Church*—for it is impossible for us to believe in the Church without at the same time accepting all the truths which the same Church proposes for our belief.

That some such summary should exist from the very beginning of the Church, was a necessary consequence of the commission given by our Lord to His Apostles when, as shall be seen later on, He directed them to go forth and teach all nations to observe whatsoever He had

commanded. For how could they hope to discharge their commission without the aid of a summary or easy formula containing and setting forth the more essential truths of the doctrine committed to their care? Not only this, but such summary could but become still more necessary as time went on; for, on the one hand, the Christian faith was intended, as our Lord clearly stated, for all nations and generations; and, on the other hand, He was equally urgent in requiring that it should be the same in every age and clime. Now, who can fail to see that to secure and preserve such unity of belief in every age and clime, it was absolutely necessary to comprise its fundamental points in a summary or form easily within the grasp of the humblest intelligence? Clearly, then, the Church was called on to provide a brief, authoritative statement of the truths to be believed by those who entered her bosom.

Furthermore, various passages of the New Testament go to show that it was not enough merely to accept such truths, but that as well as this the faithful were required to confess and give expression to their belief, and even to *hold the form of sound words* delivered to them by the Apostles. There is sufficient evidence to show that, even before the New Testament was written, a profession of faith was required of those about to be baptized; and this implies a form of profession of faith as a test of the belief of the converts, and a guarantee that they knew and accepted the principal truths taught by the Apostles as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. At all events such a summary was early in use in the shape of the time-honoured Apostles' Creed, so called because it is a brief statement of the principal truths of faith taught by the Apostles.

It is also called the Symbol of the Apostles. For not only is it an accurate summary of Christian doctrine, but it is also a sure mark, a sign, a watchword, to identify a definite class of persons and things. As the soldier is known by his uniform, and the servant by his livery, so the Christian is known by the profession of faith contained in the Symbol, and by it is distinguished from all others—from idolators, Jews, and heretics—from all, in a word, who do not belong to the true faith. The reason is that no one can be a Christian who does not profess the faith taught by Christ; while the faith taught by Christ is that which He has transmitted to us through His Apostles. Now, whoever professes the Creed professes the doctrine of the Apostles—the doctrine of Christ Himself—and hence proclaims himself a Christian; while he who rejects it, either wholly or in part, rejects the doctrine of the Apostles, rejects the doctrine of Christ, and therefore does not belong to Him. The Creed, then, is the Christian's special token; so much so, that should anyone, even an angel from

heaven, teach any point contrary to the Creed, he is forthwith to be regarded as a heretic, an infidel, a person cut off from the Church : *But though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.*¹

The Creed, then, is the means by which we may easily distinguish the true believer from one who is not such, the true soldier of Jesus Christ from the base deserter, the true child of the Church from all false brethren. The history of heretics in all ages shows us how true this is. Thus, Sabellian could say : " I believe in God," but he would not add : " The Father Almighty " ; and consequently was a false brother. The Manichean could say : " I believe in God the Father Almighty," but refused to add : " Creator of heaven and earth " ; and consequently was a false brother. The Arian could say : " I believe in Jesus Christ," but would not add : " His only Son " and consequently was a false brother. The Nestorian could say : " I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son," but would not add : " Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary " ; and consequently was a false brother. And so on with every heretic who has ever fallen away from the Church—he either leaves out certain portions of the Creed, or, if he repeats it all, he explains away certain parts of it, to which he gives a meaning of his own—a meaning never intended or accepted by the Church of Christ.

Important, however, as is the Creed, how brief it is ! Yet, brief as it is, it comprises all that Jesus Christ has revealed and all that the Church teaches—the unity of the Godhead, and the distinction of the Divine Persons ; the names of each of these Persons, and the diversity of the operations attributed to them : Creation accomplished by the Father, Redemption by the Son, and Sanctification by the Holy Ghost ; or, rather, to be more accurate, Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification accomplished conjointly by the Three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and, finally, the Church, and its sanctity, which renders it God's work *par excellence*, established to lead us to our supreme end, the immediate possession of God, and, through that immediate possession, to the unending happiness of heaven. Now all these things, as well as a great many more, are contained in the few words of the Creed, just as the acorn embraces within its small volume the mighty oak that will one day be king of the forest ; or just as the tiny body of the infant comprises all the elements that, with advance of years, will one day blossom out into the handsome and vigorous perfection of manhood's estate. In the same way, the truths enumerated in the Creed are developed and brought to their actual perfection

¹ Gal. i. 8.

—all that is contained therein is or will be unfolded and revealed to light by the patient labour of the centuries; but, when all is said and done, nothing can ever be added that was not substantially there already.

Hence it is that the Church employs other Symbols in addition to the Apostles' Creed, such as that of Constantinople, which is recited by the priest at Mass, and the Athanasian Creed, which is recited by the clergy in the divine office. These Creeds, however, do not differ substantially from that of the Apostles, and merely contain an ampler and more distinct declaration of certain truths, which the heretics of the first centuries had specially rejected or called into doubt.

This much being borne in mind, let us now see what are the duties of a Christian with regard to the Creed.

The Creed has been given us before all else to teach us the necessary truths of our religion. It is, then, our duty to learn it and commit it to memory. The same precept, says St. Thomas, that binds us to believe, also binds us to know and believe all the articles of the Apostles' Creed. A vague and general faith is not enough for salvation,—there is also required an explicit and distinct faith in certain definite truths. Hence it is that the Church never admitted anyone to baptism without the public recitation of the Creed—a practice which is observed to this very day in the baptism of infants, in whose stead sponsors recite the Creed. He, then, who does not know the Creed cannot be excused from grave sin, since his ignorance can only proceed from culpable indolence, and from disregard of his duties as a Christian. Such is the opinion of St. Thomas; and such also is the opinion of St. Charles Borromeo, who even went so far as to direct his priests to refuse absolution to penitents ignorant of the articles of the Creed.

When I speak of knowing the Creed, however, I must be understood to mean not merely the words, but the sense. One may know the words very well, and yet be quite ignorant in matters of faith. What use is a mere superficial knowledge, which affords neither instruction nor light? Indeed, it would be even better not to know the words, rather than not to possess the reality. Hence it is very important to know the Creed just as it is taught in the Catechism, and to study it so as thoroughly to grasp its meaning.

In the second place, the Creed has been given us not only as a solemn protestation of faith, but also as a shield against temptation and sin. Another duty of ours, then, will be to recite it often, as we are taught by the example of the Church, which has it repeated over and over again in the divine office. We should, then, recite it frequently, both for the purpose of honouring God by this authentic evidence of our

faith, and of putting ourselves on our guard against the many temptations to which we are exposed. He who believes firmly in the truths proposed in the Creed,—the truth of One God, the Lord Omnipotent, to whom all is subject; the truth of the sufferings endured by Christ to destroy sin; the truth of a future life,—will not easily be induced to offend God, and hence will more easily withstand the assaults of temptation. This is the buckler which St. Paul advises us to take up at once so as to ward off the darts of the enemy: *In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.*¹

But for the recitation of the Creed to be agreeable to God it must not be made lightly or at haphazard. And here arises a reflection which I shall, perhaps, have occasion to repeat more than once: it is, that by the habitual use of certain things we convert gold into dross—we spoil, we alter, we reduce to nothing the holiest practices and the choicest religious exercises. Thus, it is an undoubted fact that the recitation of the Creed is in itself an excellent Act of Faith. But as many recite it with distraction, through mere custom or formality, and without attending to what they say, it is nothing more than a mere material act, which honours God but little, and is of small advantage to the soul.

Be careful, then, to recite it worthily and devoutly, that is, with serious attention, lively faith, and fervent devotion.

With serious attention, not only attending to the correct utterance of the words, but also reflecting on their meaning and on the great truths which they contain;

With lively faith, bending your heart to believe inwardly all that the lips articulate;

And with tender devotion, accompanying the material recitation of the words with sentiments of piety, respect, love, thanksgiving, which must naturally be inspired by the faith you profess in a God who has created you, redeemed you, sanctified you, and who will one day reward you as far as the reward depends on Him.

This holy uplifting of the heart towards God is expressed in the first words of the Creed: *I believe in God*; for, according to the teaching of theologians (following St. Augustine and St. Thomas), *to believe in God* is not merely to believe there is a God, nor is it merely to have faith in His word. The very devils have this much faith; for they, as St. James says: *Believe and tremble*²—they believe after a certain manner, but their belief is without worship, is forced, and arises from the very nature of the case. True belief in God means to regard Him

¹ Eph. vi. 16.

² James ii. 19.

as our sovereign good, to place our confidence in Him, and to attach ourselves to Him with all our heart by sentiments of loving tenderness. Now, this affectionate uplifting of the heart to Him is nothing else than the tender devotion in question.

This, then, is the spirit with which we must recite the Creed, if we wish to do our duty, to glorify God by such tribute, and to procure for ourselves abundant fruits of sanctification and salvation.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN
AND EARTH.

The sense of the words of the first article of the Creed is this: "I firmly believe and unhesitatingly profess my belief in God the Father, that is, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, who by His almighty power created out of nothing heaven and the earth and all things contained therein; and not only this, but that having created them He preserves and governs them. And not only do I believe in Him in my heart and acknowledge Him with my lips, but with the greatest ardour and affection I tend to Him as my Supreme and most Perfect Good."

Such, then, is a brief summary of the first article; but, as in almost each one of the words composing it, great mysteries are concealed, the pastor will explain them with the greatest care in order that, as far as God shall permit, the faithful may be led *with fear and trembling* to contemplate the glory of His Divine Majesty.

I.—I BELIEVE

2.—Meaning of the word Belief. To *believe* does not here mean *to think, to suppose, to be of opinion*; but as Sacred Scripture teaches it means a most firm and certain assent, by virtue of which we unhesitatingly and steadfastly trust in God when He reveals His mysteries. Hence he is said to believe (as far as here concerns us) who is certain and perfectly convinced of a truth without any shadow of doubt.

Nor should anyone imagine that the knowledge that comes from faith is less certain on the ground that we do not see the truths which it proposes to our belief. Though the divine light

by which we know them does not endow them with evidence, yet it does not permit us to doubt of them : *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath Himself shone in our hearts, that the Gospel might not be hidden to us as to them that are lost.*¹

3.—Faith excludes curiosity. From this it follows that he who is in possession of this heavenly knowledge of faith, is free from inquisitive curiosity. When God commanded us to believe, He did not wish us to scrutinize His divine judgments, nor to enquire into their reasons and motives ; but He did command an unwavering faith leading the soul to rest content in the knowledge it has of His eternal truths. Nay, since, as the Apostle testifies, *God is true, and every man a liar,*² and since it is only the proud and presumptuous who will refuse to accept the words of a grave and prudent man, or will require him to prove his statements by reason or evidence, what rashness, or rather what folly, would it not be for one who, on hearing the very words of God Himself, would insist on demanding proofs of the heavenly and saving doctrine of salvation ? Faith, then, must be free, not only from every doubt, but also from all desire to demonstrate or scrutinize the truths we believe.

4.—Open profession of Faith necessary. The pastor will also point out that he who says, *I believe*, expressing by this word the inward assent of his mind, which is an interior act of faith, must also openly profess and with the utmost readiness confess and proclaim the truths he inwardly believes. Every true believer should be filled with that spirit which inspired the Prophet when he declared : *I have believed, and therefore have I spoken ;*³ should imitate the Apostles who replied to the princes of the people : *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard ;*⁴ should be encouraged by the noble saying of St. Paul : *I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth ;*⁵ and by those words which expressly confirm the truth of what is here asserted : *With the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*⁶

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 6.² Rom. iii. 4.³ Ps. cxv. 10.⁴ Acts iv. 20.⁵ Rom. i. 16.⁶ Rom. x. 10.

II.—I BELIEVE IN GOD

5.—The excellence of Christian Faith. These words make us at once realize the dignity and excellence of the Christian faith, and along with this all we owe to the goodness of God who has deigned to raise us up by the truths of faith, as by so many steps, to the knowledge of that which is sublimest and most desirable in the universe.

6.—Difference between Christian philosophical knowledge of God. For between Christian philosophy and the wisdom of the world there is this great difference, that the latter, guided as it is by the light of nature alone, makes but slow progress, and this with much labour and difficulty, from effects and perceptions of sense, until at last it is just able to contemplate the invisible things of God, and to recognize and understand a First Cause and Author of all things; while Christian philosophy, on the contrary, so quickens the natural penetration of the mind that, without any difficulty, it can penetrate the heavens, and, illuminated by divine light, contemplate first of all the eternal Fount of Light, and then the things below Him. So that with greatest joy of soul, we experience how true it is, as the Prince of the Apostles says, that we have been called *out of darkness into His marvellous light*,¹ and then *believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable*.²

Rightly, then, do the faithful first and foremost profess their belief in God whose majesty,³ according to the expression of the Prophet Jeremias, we declare to be incomprehensible; for, as the Apostle says, *He dwells in light inaccessible, which no man hath seen nor can see*,⁴ just as He Himself said to Moses: *Man shall not see Me and live*.⁵ And hence it is that for the soul to soar up to God, than whom there exists nothing higher or more sublime, it is necessary for it to be separated and disengaged from the senses—a privilege not given to it by nature in this life.

7.—God knowable by Reason. Though such is the case, yet *God*, says St. Paul, *left not Himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*.⁶ This explains how it was that the philosophers were able to form no mean idea of God; to proclaim that in Him there could be nothing corporeal, gross,

¹ 1 Peter ii. 9.² 1 Peter i. 8.³ Jer. xxxii.⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 16.⁵ Exod. xxx. 20.⁶ Acts xiv. 16.

or compound ; to attribute to Him the plenitude of power and such an abundance of all good gifts that from Him as from a perpetual and inexhaustible source of goodness and charity is derived every good and perfect gift possessed by every nature ; to call Him Wise, the Author and Lover of Truth, the Just, the Sovereign Benefactor, and various other names denoting supreme and absolute perfection ; and to recognize that His immense and infinite power fills all space, and extends to every thing.

All these truths, however, are far better established and much more clearly expressed in Sacred Scripture. For instance : *God is a spirit* ;¹ and : *Be you perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect* ;² and : *All things are naked and open to His eyes* ;³ *Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom of the knowledge of God* ;⁴ and : *God is true* ;⁵ and : *I am the way and the truth and the life* ;⁶ and : *Thy right hand is full of justice* ;⁷ and : *Thou openest Thy hand and fillest with blessing every living creature* ;⁸ and, finally : *Whither shall I go from Thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy face ? If I ascend into heaven Thou art there, if I descend into hell Thou art present ; if I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me* ;⁹ and : *Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord* ?¹⁰

From an investigation of His works, philosophers have been able to attain a knowledge of these great and sublime conceptions regarding God's nature, which are, moreover, in full accord with the teaching of the Inspired Volume. And yet, even here we may see the necessity of revelation from on high, if we but notice that not only does faith, as has been already pointed out, lay open clearly and at once to the ignorant and the unlearned those truths which only the learned could discover, and that by long study ; but also that the knowledge of truth given by faith is much more certain, clear and free from error than if it had been acquired by ordinary methods of human science.

But it is in the notion which it furnishes of the nature of God that its superiority is particularly displayed. The study of nature does not usually make that nature known to all in general, whereas the light of faith has made it accessible in an ineffable way to those who trustingly believe. Now, the knowledge in question is contained in the articles of the Creed, which clearly unfold to us the unity of the Divine Essence, and the distinction of the Three Persons, and show us that man's

¹ John iv. 24.² Matt. v. 48.³ Heb. iv. 13.⁴ Rom. xi. 33.⁵ Rom. iii. 4.⁶ John xiv. 16.⁷ Ps. xlvii. 11.⁸ Ps. cxliv. 16.⁹ Ps. cxxxviii. 7.¹⁰ Jer. xxiii. 24.

last end is God Himself, from whom we are to expect the possession of the everlasting happiness of heaven, according to the words of St. Paul: *God is a rewarder to them that seek Him.*¹ How many and how great are these rewards, and whether they are attainable by human reason, the Prophet Isaias, ages before the Apostle, had declared in these words: *From the beginning of the world they have not heard, nor perceived with the ears; the eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee.*²

8.—There is one God, and not more than one. From what has been already said, it follows that we must also confess that there is one God and not more than one. For we attribute supreme goodness and infinite perfection to God. Now, it is absolutely impossible that what is supreme and infinitely perfect should be found in more natures than one. A being that falls short of anything necessary to perfection becomes by that very fact confessedly imperfect, and consequently possesses not the nature of God. This truth is affirmed in various passages of Holy Writ: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;*³ again we have the command of God: *Thou shalt not have strange Gods before me;*⁴ and furthermore, He often admonishes us by mouth of the Prophet: *I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no God;*⁵ while the Apostle's words are clear and precise: *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*⁶

9.—The name God is sometimes given to creatures. Nor need we be surprised if even in Sacred Scripture we sometimes find the name of God conferred on creatures. For when Holy Writ calls the prophets and judges gods, it was certainly not in the same sense as the Gentiles, who foolishly and impiously believed there were many gods; the intention was simply to denote, according to the mode of speech then in vogue, some eminent quality or some office which had been given them by God.

The Christian faith, then, believes and professes that God is one in nature, substance and essence, as is said in the Nicene Creed in confirmation of this truth. And ascending still higher, our faith recognizes God to be one in such a way that it honours and adores the unity in the Trinity and the Trinity in the unity, a mystery we now proceed to discuss, since it follows next in the Creed.

¹ Heb. xi. 6.² Is. lxiv. 4.³ Deut. vi. 4.⁴ Exod. xx. 3.⁵ Is. xlv. 6.⁶ Eph. iv. 5.

III.—THE FATHER

10.—God is the Father of all men, but especially of Christians.

As the word Father is given to God for more than one reason, we must first of all determine in what sense it is given Him here. Even some from amongst those whose darkness was never illumined by the light of faith, have recognized God to be an eternal substance, from which all things had their beginning, and by whose providence all things are ruled and preserved in their order and state ; and just as in human affairs, he from whom a family is sprung, and by whose wisdom and authority it is governed, is called father, so on the same principle they decided to give the name of Father to God, whom they acknowledged as Creator and Ruler of the universe. The Sacred Scriptures employed the same name, when, speaking of God, they desired to show us that to Him were to be attributed the creation of all things, supreme power, and the wonderful providence that rules the universe. Thus we read : *Is not He thy father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee ?*¹ and elsewhere : *Have we not all one Father ? Hath not one God created us ?*²

It is in the books of the New Testament, however, that He is frequently, and in a much more special way, called the Father of Christians, *who have not received the spirit of bondage in fear, but have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby they cry, Abba (Father).*³ *For the Father hath bestowed on us that manner of charity, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God,*⁴ *and if sons, heirs also, heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*⁵ *who is the First-born amongst many brethren,*⁶ *for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren.*⁷ Whether, therefore, we consider God in the general light of creation and providence, or whether we specially dwell on His particular adoption of us as sons, it is with good right that the faithful make profession of this belief that God is their Father.

11.—Mysteries to be inferred from the word Father.

But besides the meaning already set forth, the pastor will explain that on hearing the word Father they ought to raise their minds to sublimer mysteries. Under the name Father the Divine oracles begin to reveal a most ineffable truth, which is deeply hidden away in that inaccessible light wherein God dwelleth, and which human reason and learning could never attain to nor even conjecture to exist.

¹ Deut. xxxii. 6.

² Mal. ii. 10.

³ Rom. viii. 15.

⁴ 1 John iii. 1.

⁵ Rom. viii. 17.

⁶ Rom. viii. 29.

⁷ Heb. ii. 11.

For, this name implies that in the one essence of the Godhead, not one person only, but a distinction of Persons, must be admitted. In the one Godhead there are Three Persons—that of the Father, who is begotten of none ; that of the Son, who is begotten of the Father before all ages ; that of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son from all eternity. Now, in that one substance of the Divinity, the Father is the First Person, who, together with His only-begotten Son and the Holy Ghost, is one God, one only Lord, not in the singularity of one Person, but in the Trinity of one substance. But these Three Persons are to be understood as distinct only in their respective properties or relations (it would be impious to imagine that there is anything unlike or unequal in them),—the Father being unbegotten, the Son begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both. Thus we recognize one and the same nature, one and the same substance, for the Three Persons ; but in such a way that in the confession of the true and eternal Godhead we believe that we are to adore distinction in the Persons, Unity in the Essence, and equality in the Trinity, with all possible piety and respect.

Hence, when we say that the Father is the First Person, we are not to be understood to mean that in the Trinity there is anything of first or last, of greater or less. Far from the mind of the Christian be so impious a thought, since the Christian religion proclaims the same eternity, the same majesty of glory in the Three Persons. But as the Father is the beginning without beginning, we truly and unhesitatingly affirm that He is the First Person ; and because He is distinguished by the relation of paternity, so of Him alone is it especially true that He begot the Son, and this from all eternity. For that He was always both God and Father is plainly signified when in this profession of faith we join together the name of *God* and the name of *Father*.

Since the knowledge and exposition of the Trinity is of all others the most profound and difficult, and the most exposed to danger of grave error, the pastor will teach his flock that they ought scrupulously to retain the terms, *Nature* and *Person*, which are, so to say, consecrated to the explanations of this mystery ; and never forget that the Unity is in the Nature, and the distinction in the Persons ; and that, at the same time, they ought not to pry into these truths too closely, remembering that : *He who is the searcher of majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory*.¹ It ought to be enough for us to know by sure and

¹ Prov. xxv. 27.

certain faith that these truths have been taught us by God, to doubt whose oracles would be the height of folly and misery. Go, He has said, *teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*;¹ and again: *There are Three that give testimony in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.*²

Let him, then, who by God's good gift believes these truths, constantly pray and beseech God the Father who made all things out of nothing; who *Ordereth all things sweetly*;³ who *gave us power to become the sons of God*;⁴ and who has revealed the mystery of the Trinity to the mind of man,—let him pray unceasingly, that being received one day into the eternal tabernacles, he may be worthy to know how ineffable is the fecundity of the Father, who by contemplating and understanding Himself begot a Son like and equal to Himself; and how the selfsame and equal love of charity in Father and Son, which is none other than the Holy Ghost proceeding from both, knits together the begetting and the begotten, each to other, with an eternal and indissoluble bond; and that thus the essence of the divine Trinity is but one and the distinction of the Three Persons perfect.

IV.—ALMIGHTY

12.—Meaning of the word Omnipotent. To show with what great piety and devotion God's holy name is to be honoured, Sacred Scripture employs various names to describe His supreme power and infinite majesty; but the pastor will take particular care to dwell on that almighty power which is attributed to Him most frequently of all. Thus He says of Himself: *I am the Almighty God*;⁵ and again, Jacob when sending his sons to Joseph prayed for them thus: *May my Almighty God make him favourable to you.*⁶ It is also written in the Apocalypse: *The Lord God who is and who was and who is to come*;⁷ and in the same book the last day is called: *The great day of the Almighty God.*⁸ Sometimes the same meaning is expressed in several words, as for instance: *No word shall be impossible with God*;⁹ and: *Is the hand of the Lord unable?*¹⁰ and also: *Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt*,¹¹ and so on—modes of speech which convey some idea of what is comprised under the word Omnipotent.

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

⁵ Gen. xvii. 1.

⁹ Luke i. 37.

² 1 John v. 7.

⁶ Gen. xliii. 14.

¹⁰ Num. xi. 23.

³ Wisdom viii. 1.

⁷ Apoc. i. 8.

¹¹ Wisdom xii. 18.

⁴ John i. 12.

⁸ Apoc. xvi. 14.

By this term, then, we understand that there is not and cannot be imagined, conceived, nor thought of, anything which God cannot do. He has power to do all those things which are in any way within the sphere of our comprehension, be they ever so difficult, such, for instance, as to reduce all things to nothing, and in an instant to create other worlds ; but it is also in His power to do far greater things, of which the mind of man can form no conception.

13.—God cannot
Sin nor be
Deceived.

Though God can do all things, he cannot lie, nor deceive, nor be deceived, nor sin, nor perish, nor be ignorant of anything whatsoever ; for all these things are found only in beings whose actions are imperfect ; but God, whose acts are ever all-perfect, cannot, we say, do such things,—to be capable of doing them implies weakness, not supreme and infinite power over all things such as He possesses. Thus, then, while believing God to be Almighty we completely exclude from Him all that is not closely connected and in harmony with the supreme perfection of His nature.

14.—Why Omnipotence alone is mentioned in the Creed.

The pastor will explain why it is that all other attributes of God have been omitted in the Creed, and this one alone well and wisely proposed to our belief. In acknowledging God to be Almighty, we thereby confess that He knows all things, and that all things are subject to His power and dominion. Moreover, since we have not the slightest doubt that He can do all things, it necessarily follows that we must believe Him to possess all and every quality, the absence of which would render it impossible for us to conceive or understand how He can be omnipotent.

Moreover, nothing is so calculated to strengthen our faith and hope as the profound, unshaken conviction that there is nothing impossible to God. Whatever may at any time be proposed to our belief, be it ever so great, be it ever so wonderful, and however much it exceeds the ordinary course of nature, yet the mind easily and unhesitatingly accepts it once it has grasped the truth that God is Almighty. Nay, more, the greater the truths the Divine oracles announce, the more ready will the mind be to accept them ; while if any blessing is looked for, the soul is never discouraged by the magnitude of the expected boon, but is cheered and comforted by the recurring remembrance that nothing is impossible to an Almighty God.

With this faith, therefore, we should feel encouraged and

strengthened, especially whenever we are called on to do any important and difficult work for the utility and advantage of our neighbour, as well as whenever we desire to ask of God any special favour for ourselves. Our Lord Himself deigned to instruct us regarding the former of these duties, when, rebuking the Apostles for their incredulity, He said: *If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain, remove from hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you*,¹ while as regards the latter, St. James bears witness: *Let him ask in faith nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, that is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord.*²

This faith, moreover, offers us many other benefits and advantages. Thus it forms us in humility and modesty of spirit; for we have the words of the Prince of the Apostles: *Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God.*³ It also teaches us not to fear where there is no cause for fear; but to fear God alone in whose power we and all that we have are placed; for our Saviour has said: *I will show you whom you shall fear; fear ye Him who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell.*⁴ Finally, this faith helps us also to recognize and celebrate God's infinite mercies towards us; for he who remembers that God is Almighty, cannot be so ungrateful as not to cry out over and over again: *He that is mighty hath done great things to me.*⁵

But if, in this article, we call the Father
15.—There is one only Almighty, not three. Almighty, no one is to imagine—for that would be an error—that the name is so attributed to Him as not to be equally applicable to the Son and the Holy Ghost. Just as we say the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and yet that they are not three Gods but one God; so when we affirm that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are equally omnipotent, we do not acknowledge three Almighties but one only Almighty. As, however, for a certain special reason—because He is the source of all being—we call the Father by this name; so also do we attribute wisdom to the Son because He is the eternal Word of the Father; and goodness to the Holy Ghost because He is the Love of both. And yet, according to the teaching of the Catholic faith, these and such like terms may be given indiscriminately to each of the Three Persons.

¹ Matt. xvii. 19. ² James i. 6. ³ 1 Peter v. 6. ⁴ Luke xii. 5. ⁵ Luke i. 49.

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED

I. GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

Q. What does the first article of the *Creed*: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," teach us?

A. The first article of the *Creed* teaches us that there is one God, and only one; that He is omnipotent and has created heaven and earth and all things contained in them, that is to say, the whole Universe.

Q. How do we know that there is a God?

A. We know that there is a God because reason proves it and faith confirms it.

Q. Why do we call God the *Father*?

A. We call God the *Father* because by nature He is the Father of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, that is to say, of the Son begotten of Him; because God is the Father of all men, whom He has created and whom He preserves

and governs; finally, because by grace He is the Father of all good Christians, who are hence called the adopted sons of God.

Q. Why is the Father the *First Person* of the Blessed Trinity?

A. The Father is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, because He does not proceed from any other Person, but is the Principle of the other two Persons, that is, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What is meant by the word *Omnipotent*?

A. The word *Omnipotent* means that God can do all that He wills.

Q. God can neither sin nor die; how then do we say He can do all things?

A. Though He can neither sin nor die, we say God can do all things, because to be able to sin or die is not an effect of power, but of weakness which cannot exist in God who is most perfect.

Second Instruction on the Creed

I BELIEVE

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth—such is the first article of the Creed which now demands our attention, and of which the Roman Catechism gives this brief explanation: “I firmly believe and unhesitatingly profess my belief in God the Father, that is, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, who by His almighty power created out of nothing heaven and earth and all things contained therein; and not only this, but that having created them He also preserves and governs them; and not only do I believe these things in my heart and acknowledge them with my lips, but with the greatest love and veneration I endeavour to attain God as supreme and all-perfect good.”

Such, then, is the Church's brief explanation of the general meaning of the first article of the Creed; but to understand it as it deserves and ought to be understood, it will be necessary to examine it word by word so as to unfold and bring to light the many truths, the many prodigies, and the many evidences of God's goodness, power, and mercy, contained in these few words.

Beginning, then, with the first word of the Creed, the expression *I believe* is not to be taken in the sense usually given to it in ordinary speech, and which generally signifies no more than *I think, I imagine, I suppose, I am of opinion*; but its signification in the Creed is equivalent to holding for sure and certain, being convinced of, assenting to, the truths of the Creed without the smallest shadow of doubt or hesitation, and even more firmly than if we actually saw them before our eyes, or actually touched them with our hands. And hence, when in the beginning of the Creed we say that we believe, we mean that we hold all the truths of faith for sure and certain and believe them more firmly than we assent to the fact that it is day or that in the heavens there are such things as sun, moon, and stars,—nay, more firmly than we assent to the fact that fire is hot and that ice is cold.

But is not this mere blind faith? Is it not certainty without sufficient grounds? Is it not conviction without due motive? Or, if there is a motive, where is it? If there are grounds, what are they? Whence do we proceed to make an act of faith? What is our starting-

point ? On what do we rely for the certainty of the truths we profess to believe ?

To answer these questions, let us first see how human faith ordinary conviction or certainty, is usually acquired. Countless are the things which we are sure of and accept as factors in our daily life, yet which we have never seen, never hope to see, never can see, because they are beyond our reach, are distant from us, have taken place in the dead and buried past, centuries before we were born, or occur in countries, in places, we can never hope to see. For instance, how firmly do I believe that I was born of such or such a father or mother, though my knowledge of the fact is derived from the testimony of others in whose word I unhesitatingly believe. In all such cases, then, the ground on which I base my assent is the word of persons on whom I can rely without fear of error or deception.

Turning now to our faith in the truths contained in the Apostles' Creed : the first truth we profess, the truth that is the basis and starting point of all the others, is that there is a God, a Being above all other beings, who sees all, who knows all, who governs all, who is eternal, immense, all-powerful, infinitely perfect in all perfection.

Now this all-wise, all-powerful, infinitely perfect Being has spoken many times to man ; first of all to Adam and Eve ; then to the Patriarchs ; then to Moses from out the burning bush in the desert, at the foot of Mount Horeb, and on the summit of Sinai ; then to the Prophets and, through them, to His chosen people ; and finally in the fullness of time He has spoken through Jesus Christ, *His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world.*¹

And, having spoken, assuredly must He be believed ; since He sees all, knows all, cannot but know all, is truth itself, and can neither deceive nor be deceived.

But God has not spoken directly to me, and how do I know for certain that He has spoken to others ? For if I am to believe in His words I must be sure beyond all shadow of doubt that He has actually spoken to others. Who, then, is there to tell me that God has spoken to Adam and to the Patriarchs and to Moses and to the Prophets ? And, question of questions, who is there to assure me that His Son, Jesus Christ, has spoken ? Who is there who can assure me that it was God who sent Him ? And who is there who can assure me that if He came and spoke it was in God's name that He did so ?

Who but Jesus Christ Himself. And why do I believe His words ? Because of the incomparable, unique holiness of His life ; because of

¹ Heb. i. 2.

the excellence of His teaching, the unparalleled sublimity of His doctrine ; because of many prophecies fulfilled—some made of Him and fulfilled in His person down to the smallest detail—others made by Him and confirmed by events historically ascertained and as clear as noon-day ; because of the miracles He wrought—demoniacs delivered, paralytics healed, the blind given back the use of sight, the dead restored to life, natural objects substantially changed : bread multiplied, water made wine, the tempest suddenly calmed, the sea made firm beneath the feet of man : miracles that fill the Gospels from the first page to the last ; miracles publicly wrought and publicly recognized ; above all, miracles wrought by Him in witness of His divinity and of the truth of His divine mission. Now a miracle is the voice by which God speaks and manifests His presence and almighty power, so much so that were it even possible for a miracle to be wrought in confirmation of error, such error could be attributed to God alone : “ O Lord,” cries out St. Augustine, “ if what we believe is not true, it is Thou who hast deceived us.”

Such, then, are the motives of credibility—the grounds on which rests our certainty regarding the truths of faith—the reasons why each one of us can say without the slightest fear of error, *I believe* I believe, then, not because I wish to believe, not because others believe, not because I understand, not even because the Church urges me—for the Church is the intermediary, not the ultimate reason of my faith,—it is one thing to believe the truths she proposes, but another thing to believe them because she proposes them ; but I believe simply and solely because God, infinite goodness, infinite wisdom, truth itself, has spoken, and aids me by His heavenly grace to read in miracles and prophecies and other divine operations the visible proof that He has so spoken.

Our faith, then, rests on a foundation so strong, so sure, so lasting, so reliable, that it is impossible to find any other foundation that offers greater guarantees of veracity ; and this foundation is that which we make mention of in the Act of Faith when we base the firmness of our belief on the fact that GóD, the infallible truth, has revealed what we believe. We accept and firmly adhere to the truths of faith, therefore, not because they are asserted or expounded by some learned or authoritative personage, nor even because they strike us as probable or plausible, but because they have been revealed, manifested, and made known by God who is infinite wisdom, and hence cannot be deceived ; who is infinite goodness, and hence cannot deceive others or lead them into error.

How we are to recognize the truths revealed by God and how to distinguish them from false teaching will be duly indicated when we

come to explain the nature and functions of the Church. For the present it will suffice to draw a few practical conclusions from what has been already said:—

(1) The first practical conclusion is that we must accept and hold all the truths of faith with full and absolute certainty, and lend no ear to those who are so ready to point to the fact that there are many who, because they have read and studied much, have come to entertain doubts regarding certain revealed truths. What the answer to such representation is to be was given ages ago by St. Paul: *Though an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.*¹ And hence should anyone come forth as a pretended messenger of God or apostle of truth, and profess to preach things contrary to the faith, he must not be listened to, and his words must be regarded as the words, not of an angel or an apostle of truth and enlightenment, but of a traitor, an evil-doer, an unbeliever, one accursed of God.

(2) The second conclusion is that faith is supremely reasonable; that, once God has spoken, the highest use man can make of his reason is to give credence to God's message; and that those who refuse to do so are utterly unreasonable and run counter to the noblest instincts of the human soul.

(3) The third conclusion is that not only does faith exclude all doubt, all uncertainty, all hesitation, but it also dispenses us from the necessity of having to investigate the nature of the mysteries, and of submitting them to the judgment of our reason. For no matter how incomprehensible such mysteries may be, they never cease to be credible if we only remember that we have them from God, who is truth itself.

(4) A fourth conclusion is this, that since the truths to be believed rely for credibility on the sovereign authority of God who has revealed them, faith must be whole, entire, without division—not partial or by halves. He who knowingly denies even a single truth of faith, denies all the others as a matter of principle, since he thereby rejects the motive on which his belief in all the others is based, that is to say, the sovereign authority of God. Once this is questioned in one thing, it is thereby called into doubt in everything.

(5) The fifth conclusion is that faith, being a real conviction, based on the sovereign authority of God, must necessarily manifest itself in practical results. A true conviction cannot long remain secret and hidden,—it must manifest itself in words and deeds: *I have believed*, said the Psalmist, *and therefore have I spoken*;² while

¹ Gal. i. 8.

² Ps. cxv. 10.

St. Paul is equally emphatic : *I am not ashamed of the Gospel ; for it is the power of God unto salvation.*¹

Let us, therefore, accept and firmly hold each and every truth which God has revealed ; let us look to the Church and to none but the Church, to teach us what these truths are ; and let us be on our guard against those foolish men who would try to make us believe that the Church can lead us into error because, as they are so fond of asserting, the rulers of the Church are, after all, but frail and mortal men, and as men can err, therefore the Church can err. All this would be true if the rulers of the Church were left to themselves, without assistance from on high. But let us never forget that such is not the case, that the Church is enlightened and assisted by the Holy Ghost, and has the promise of Christ's special presence and protection to the very end of time.

Take an example : Twenty sailors, ignorant of navigation, man a ship that sets out for America ; the ship is never likely to reach her destination because of the mistakes and errors and general helplessness of the crew. But suppose a skilled pilot accompanies them, all such danger is at an end ; it is no longer the unskilled and uninstructed sailors who control the destinies of the vessel, but a reliable guide who thoroughly knows his business, and the result is that the ship is steered unerringly into harbour. Now in this we have a perfect picture of what happens in matters of faith. The ship represents the Church ; the Pope and the Bishops are they who guide her destinies. As mere men they are unskilled, uninstructed sailors, liable to a thousand mistakes and errors, and, considered in this respect, incapable of conducting their ship safely to port ; but with Jesus Christ at the helm and with the breath of the Holy Spirit filling the sails, the barque they man is immune from all danger. Storms may arise, contrary winds may blow, dangers may rise up to confront them on all sides, but the ship, divinely guided and governed, sails calmly on her way, secure against shipwreck, and certain to reach the divinely-appointed haven of rest and salvation.

Thus the Church, enlightened by the light of the Holy Ghost, cannot err in her teaching, and hence it is impossible that those truths, which she defines and declares to have been revealed by God, are not really so revealed.

¹ Rom. i. 16.

Third Instruction on the Creed

I BELIEVE IN GOD

IN a few short words the first article of the Apostles' Creed proposes for our belief a number of truths—the existence of God ; His unity ; the distinction of persons in this unity ; the attributes of God ; and the creation of all things—truths which it is now our duty to study in detail.

The first word of the Creed affects not only the first article, but all the others as well ; it must be understood as preceding each one of them, even though not actually repeated. As we saw in our last instruction, its meaning is that we hold as certain, as most true, and as infallible, all that these articles contain, because God, who is Truth itself, has revealed them to the Apostles, the Apostles have taught them to the Church, and the Church teaches them to us. Thus when we say *I believe*, we mean to express the firm and complete assent which we give to God's word contained in the Creed ; that we unwaveringly submit our understanding and our judgment to believe all its truths, be they ever so difficult and inscrutable ; and that we believe them with complete and absolute certitude—a certitude greater than that which we have of the very things which we know on evidence, see under our eyes, or touch with our hands. Let us remember, then, that the words *I believe* should spring from a soul strongly and deeply rooted in the true faith. All this being borne in mind, we now proceed to a detailed study of each of the articles of the Creed.

The first truth—the foundation and basis of all the others—is the existence of God, expressed in the words *I believe in God*, which is the same as to say : “ I believe that there exists a Supreme Being distinct from the whole world—the world's Sovereign Lord and Ruler.” It is, as I have said, the first truth ; for if we do not begin by believing in the existence of God, how can we believe in all the other truths which rely for their certainty on nothing else than the infallible word of God, revealing them ? Yet it is a truth of which we are convinced both by the voice of reason and by that of faith.

The voice of faith, because over and over again the Sacred

Scriptures speak to us of God, declare His perfections, make known His will. In several places God Himself witnesses *I am the Lord thy God*. It is, then, an article revealed by Him—an article as certain and incontestable as are the proofs which He has given us of His revelation, and which we shall dwell on at some length when we come to speak of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity and of the Church established by Him.

The voice of reason.—For even if this truth had not been taught by faith, it is made known by the *light of reason*. It suffices to open our eyes and contemplate the universe. The heavens, the earth, and all things contained therein, reveal the wisdom and omnipotence of a sovereign, if invisible, Creator—with one voice they tell us that there is a God by whom they were made, and by whom they live and move and have their being : *He made us, and not we ourselves*.

Just as the sight of a noble building, beautifully constructed and arranged in its many parts, each wonderfully adapted to and in keeping with the rest, at once carries one's thoughts to the plan of the architect who designed and directed the undertaking—we should consider the man a downright fool who should imagine that all the stones composing it were collected and arranged and disposed in such perfect order, purely by chance and without a guiding mind,—in precisely the same way must we reason regarding the present question—nay, with still greater reason, inasmuch as the most stupendous achievements of art are nothing compared to the beauty, the magnificence, the order, the proportion that are manifest in the structure of the universe, whether considered as a whole or in the infinite variety of its details.

On looking at the wonderful structure of the universe,—at the heavens, that rich azure canopy, studded all over and resplendent with stars, so glorious in their immensity, their beauty and their light ; at the two great luminaries of the firmament, the sun and moon, so regular and unfailing in their movements ; at the earth, so fertile in every species of produce ; at the marvellous variety and incalculable number of birds, fishes, and animals ; at the periodic course of the seasons, succeeding each other with never a departure from rule,—on looking at this wonderful universe there is no one, who is not a downright fool, but must recognize that there is a supreme Intelligence, an invisible Mind, an Architect full of wisdom and power, to whom all things owe their beginning, and who rules over all. Now this Intelligence, this Mind, this powerful and wise Architect, is God, whose glory, according to the words of divine Scripture, the heavens reveal, and the might of whose power the

firmament proclaims: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament announces the work of His hands.*¹

And what has been said of the universe at large applies equally to the formation of our own selves—of that wonderful compound called man; nay, applies even to the lowest and tiniest of things—to an insect, a butterfly, a flower, a leaf—in each of which the work of God the Creator appears no less visible. Hence, of all the various errors and mistakes of the mind of man, the most incomprehensible is that which refuses to recognize a first cause of all things, and which attributes everything to chance, in spite of the fact that everything points to God, bears witness to God, and proclaims the existence of God.

Do not, then, claim that God cannot be seen, that He does not appear to mortal eyes. He can never be seen in this way. Corporeal things are seen with the eyes—spiritual things are understood, not seen. Furthermore, how many are the things you believe without ever having seen them? You do not see the soul that vivifies your body; and yet you would doubt all things sooner than question the existence of your own soul. And why? Because, invisible though it is in itself, it manifests itself undeniably in its effects—by thought, speech, movement, operation. What folly, then, is yours, as St. Augustine remarks. In the actions of the body you recognize the presence of the soul, and yet you refuse to recognize the existence of God in the operations of things created! “O fool! to recognize the living soul in the actions of the body, and yet to refuse to recognize the hand of the Creator in the works of the creature!” Invisible though He is in Himself does He not manifest Himself in the works of His hands, and in such a way that it is impossible for Him to remain unknown? *For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*²

So true is all this that you will seek in vain for a nation so savage and so ignorant as not to believe in some divinity controlling the universe. True, indeed, peoples have varied in the notion they have formed of the divinity—some of them multiplying and splitting it up into several gods, while others have sought the deity in material things, devoid of reason. In the same way, diversity has been found to exist in rites, worship, religious observances; practices have changed according to countries; but all nations are unanimous in recognizing some divinity to whom to offer prayer, sacrifice, and vows. Now this universal consent of all peoples in admitting a deity, even though they differ in everything else, is still another infallible proof of that

¹ Ps. xviii. 1.

² Rom. i. 20.

existence ; for so constant and universal a belief can be due to only one of two causes: either God Himself has impressed it on the heart of men, or men have been invincibly led thereto by the very spectacle of creation.

But, you may ask, are there not some who refuse all belief in God, who say that there is no God, and who are commonly known as Atheists? That such persons are to be found cannot be denied, since Sacred Scripture openly affirms it: *The fool hath said in his heart: "There is no God."* But these very words clearly show how absurd and false is the assertion.

In the first place, Sacred Scripture refers to these unhappy persons as fools—the *fool hath said*—to let us see that their opinion is extravagant ; a piece of madness and folly, that could find no place in a well-balanced mind.

In the next place, Sacred Scripture observes that they deny God in their heart—the *fool hath said in his heart*—that is to say, that they think and speak in this way, not as a result of real conviction, but simply because they wish it to be so.

That there are some who are really in good faith on this head, is difficult to suppose—the idea of God is so deeply engraven on the soul that it can never be completely obliterated. Even in spite of us it will often manifest itself in us by involuntary movements and spontaneous impressions. What, for instance, is the meaning of the keen remorse which we feel as a result of certain evil deeds, and which obliges us to condemn ourselves in the secret of our hearts, even though neither accusers nor witnesses appear against us? Does not this point to a supreme Being, from whom nothing is hidden, and to whom we are ever responsible for our sins? In like manner, what is the meaning of the natural instinct that makes us raise our eyes to heaven and implore help and succour in unforeseen dangers and sudden emergencies? Does it not prove that there is a God in heaven on whom all depends, and who is able to help us? These feelings, let me repeat, are common to all, and must have some meaning. From the very fact that they are common to all, it is clear that they cannot be regarded as prejudices derived from training. No ; it is the force of the truth engraven on the heart ; it is a natural tendency leading us to God ; it is, to borrow the language of Tertullian, "the testimony of the soul naturally Christian."

While, however, there are no Atheists by conviction, there are many, even among Christians, who would endeavour to persuade themselves there is no God, so as to free themselves from all restraint and all fear, and to live like beasts according to their own sweet will. From the idea of a sovereign God there naturally follows the necessity

of worship, law, religion, and hence a system of rewards and punishments,—and herein precisely lies the thorn that pricks and torments them. Propose to their belief a God who takes no interest in their actions, and who would leave them at perfect liberty to do as they please,—oh, then they would not have the slightest difficulty in admitting His existence. But since, in admitting a God, they must necessarily also recognize Him as the just and holy arbiter of our deeds, the friend of order, the enemy of disorder and sin, the judge and avenger of evil-doers,—otherwise He would not be God,—the fear of such unwelcome consequences turns them against God, and, carried away by the transports of an insensate desire, they would persuade themselves that He does not exist, and even go so far as to flatter themselves in their hearts that such is the case, so as to live undisturbed by fears of the kind: *The fool hath said in his heart: "There is no God."* But all in vain do they strive to shut their eyes to a truth which they can never completely banish out of their souls, since there always remains at the very least a feeling of doubt, and fear attended by remorse, agitation, and distress.

All this shows us to what a degree of malice and perversity a man may be brought by vice and attachment to sin—so far even as to pluck from out his heart that natural instinct which leads Him to God, and to deny the existence of Him from whom he has received his being and who lovingly sustains him. It further shows us that there is no error, be it ever so monstrous and impious, which will not be adopted when interest leads to its acceptance. For, as St. Augustine remarks: "No one will deny the existence of God but those who would find it to their advantage that no such Being existed."

From this we must conclude that if we do not wish to be atheists, or at least tempted to become such, we must lead a good life, and keep in strict restraint the sinful passions that deprave and corrupt the heart of man.

Once faith in the existence of God is broken, and with it all dependence on Him, nothing can be expected but the most frightful depravity—a consequence noted by the Holy Ghost who, after the words "*The fool hath said,*" etc., immediately adds: *They are corrupt and are become abominable in their ways.*¹

For what check can be found against transgressions, even the most excessive or enormous, if there remains no fear of a God who sees, who watches, who leaves unpunished no bad deed—not even a thought that is wrong? The restraint imposed by human laws or human respect is too weak and insufficient, as is proved home to the

¹ Ps. xiii. 1.

hilt by the long list of atrocious crimes committed daily before our eyes.

We are, then, bound to conclude that the denial of God is not only a most absurd and monstrous error, but is also most pernicious and injurious to good conduct, public order, and the peace and security of the country at large ; and, consequently, that belief in God, based as it is on a thousand reasons, is as necessary and useful, as it is firmly to be held.

But who is this God in whose existence we are to believe ? That is a question to which I am unable to give a just, adequate, satisfactory answer. God is so immense that He cannot be measured or embraced by our thought. But is his incomprehensibility a sufficient reason for refusing to believe in Him ? This would be nothing short of a wretched and frivolous pretext, which is sometimes made by those who forget that in the world there are many things equally incomprehensible, yet which are accepted as certain and undeniable.

True it is that we cannot perfectly comprehend God ; but it is also true that we can know and understand Him in some sort. It is not possible for us to have a perfect idea of Him ; for as He is an infinite and immense Being, and as our souls are weak and limited, if we could comprehend Him, either He would not be what He is or we should not be what we are.

This, however, does not render us incapable of forming some idea of Him, imperfect to be sure, but sufficiently exact and clear to enable us to understand what He is to us, and what we are to him ; to speak of Him with respect ; and to entertain an intimate conviction of His existence, His power, wisdom, goodness, and justice ; and this is quite sufficient to direct and conduct us securely along the paths of life.

Later on I shall speak of the essence of God, and of His divine perfections, when we shall see that He is one—necessarily one—and that there can be no other God, no other Lord, beside Him ; and this is the second truth we profess in the first article of the Creed.

Fourth Instruction on the Creed

GOD EXISTS¹

It is an undeniable fact : go East, to the shores of China and Japan ; or West, to the slopes of the Rocky Mountains and the interminable plains of the pampas of Patagonia ; go North, amidst the ice-huts of the poverty-stricken Esquimaux ; or South, among the lonely isles of Terra del Fuego ; travel among the uncivilized and barbarous peoples ; ask even the savage and the cannibal : " Do you believe in the existence of a supreme Being, Lord and Master of all things ? " and, all without a single exception will answer, with one voice : " Yes, we admit Him, we fear Him, we adore Him." " And your fathers, your predecessors, your ancestors—had they always the belief you have ? " " Yes, we have received it from them." And even though they could not, or would not, reply in words, the answer would be given for them by their temples still standing or by the ruins of those long fallen into decay ; by their altars, their tombs, their sacrifices, their prayers, their hymns, their images, their laws, their customs, their huts, their dens, their caverns, their superstitions, their whole surroundings. The cry of all the ages, historic and pre-historic, that fills all space, bursting forth in countless forms from every breast, is one alone, and it is this : There is a God. The living and the dead, the good and the bad, the pious and the wicked, the oppressed and the oppressor, the victim and the executioner—all proclaim that there is a God. Infinitely various are man's notions as to the forms of worship, the images, even the numbers of the divinity, but the basis, the substance, is ever the same, ever centres in the belief that there is a God. A people holding that no God exists has yet to be seen on the face of the earth. The whole human race, then, affirms the existence of God ; no fact is more certain, more universal, more constant, more perpetual,—he who doubts it ignores all history and tradition, and wilfully shuts his eyes to the light.

¹ In view of the importance of the subject, it has been deemed advisable to consider the existence of God in an additional instruction taken from Bonomelli's *Seguiamo la Ragione*, and Devivier's *Cours d'Apologétique Chrétienne*—works which shall be liberally drawn on in the Instructions on the Creed.

A strange and singular fact, surely, this universal, constant, perpetual belief in the existence of a divinity ; yet there is one particular that renders it stranger and more singular still, and it is, that though the whole human race proclaims the existence of God, not one claims to have seen or heard or touched Him. All men, all times, all places, affirm that there is a supreme Being whom none sees, or hears—nay, whom none can see or hear on this earth ; yet before this invisible Being all tremble, all pray, all adore ; to Him countless victims are offered ; for Him heroic enterprises are undertaken ; the whole earth, in all ages, has been covered with colossal, stupendous monuments in His honour ; all tongues lisp His name ; continents, and islands scattered in the ocean, repeat it ; the idea of this supreme Being perennially affects, penetrates, moves the whole human race—all is done for Him, and yet He is invisible. A strange, an almost incredible, fact, yet a fact as certain as the existence of the world ; and, being a fact, it must have some cause, some rational explanation of its existence in every age and clime and amongst all peoples ; for there is no effect without a cause. How, then, are we to account for this universal belief in the existence of a supreme Being ?

Science unhesitatingly lays down the principle that every real, instinctive tendency of any being or nature towards a particular object implies the existence of that object. Thus we have the tendency to see, that is to say, we have the faculty of sight, and to this corresponds its proper object—light and things to be seen ; we have the tendency to hear, ~~that is, the~~ faculty of hearing, and to this corresponds the existence of sound ; and so on. In the same way, we possess an instinctive indestructible tendency, leading us to admit a supreme Cause, a first Principle, of some sort,—the fact of man's universal and perpetual belief in the divinity is a clear proof of such tendency ; and hence, in accordance with the principle laid down just now, that supreme Cause, that first beginning, must exist. A faculty implies an object to actuate it ; a force implies a term towards which it is directed, an arrow, the target it is to strike ; a river, the lake or sea towards which it makes its way.

In divers ways we all tend to God, we all speak of Him, we all reason about Him ; and hence there must be a God, unless, indeed, we are prepared to admit that we tend towards nothing, are lost hopelessly in it, and are condemned to wander perpetually towards a goal we never can hope to reach.

The astronomer, Léverrier, while investigating the course of the planets round the sun, observed a deviation in the movement of one of them, and immediately concluded that, away out of sight

and far beyond that planet, there must necessarily be another planet to account for the deviation. He did not see this planet, but the attraction it exercised on the one he did see made him so certain of its existence that he was able to calculate its position and magnitude. Years after his death another astronomer proved the correctness of his supposition by actually discovering the planet which to the present day is named after *Léverrier*. Does not this remind us of the tendency of the mind of man towards belief in God ? The whole human race has ever felt, and still feels, an irresistible attraction towards belief in a supreme Being far above the visible world and infinitely different from the beings we already know or see around us. Towards that Being all minds, like the stars, turn ; therefore that Being, whom we call God, exists.

True, God is never seen. But neither do we see our own soul, and yet it moves and vivifies the body ; neither do we see truth or justice or order, and yet they govern the world and none doubts of their existence ; neither do we see the force of attraction, and yet it controls the movements of the universe. Why, then, doubt the existence of God, who attracts and moves countless myriads of beings ? When the sun is set, it is no longer seen ; but we see the stars and planets, which from the depths of the heavens it still illuminates, and we say, " The sun is there " In the same way men do not see God in Himself, but they see Him in His works, and in their good sense they say, " God exists " ; they do not see Him with the eyes of the body, but assuredly do they see Him with the eyes of the mind. Let us look more closely into this :

Suppose someone were to point out to you a picture, a clock, a ship, or the like, and were to say : " See these objects—they had no maker—they are merely the work of chance," would you believe him ? Certainly not—you would at once regard him as a knave or a fool, and you would exclaim : " A picture presupposes a painter, a clock a maker, a ship a builder." Or at sight of a noble city, with its squares and streets and palaces and halls, who would be so mad as to claim that these came there of themselves without the hand of man ; or on hearing some beautiful piece of music, who would be so senseless as to imagine that it composed itself or was not the outcome of a creative mind ?

Apply these considerations to the world around us. The earth, with its rivers, its seas, its lakes, its plants, its birds, its animals, with all that is necessary for the life of each one of these ; with its succession of seasons ; with its rains and its snows and its winds, with all the wonderful order that draws these creatures together, and makes them be of mutual service ; the firmament with its stupendous

movements of countless bodies that stud its azure depths, each following its own course with unerring accuracy ; the exact laws that regulate the course of every being in the universe ; the regular development of life in all its forms ; the beauty, the proportion, of all living things, even the tiniest insect—are not all these things in their grandeur, beauty, proportion, order, variety, much more than a picture, a clock, a ship, a beautiful city, a musical composition ? Now if you cannot imagine a picture without a painter, a ship or a clock or a city without a maker, a piece of music without a composer, how can you look on the heavens and the earth and all things that are in them without thinking on and recognizing their creator and director, who certainly cannot be a man, nay, not all the men that have ever lived ?

Or, to look at the matter from another point of view : there are certain mountain-peaks so high and inaccessible that they have never yet been trodden by the foot of man. Suppose it should happen that some day or other one of life's chances enables you to reach such lofty summit ; and suppose that there on that lonely peak, where you believe no human being has ever been before, you find a beautiful inlaid table decorated with figures of birds and animals and men, and on it a clock ticking the minutes in perfect time ; and suppose that on your descent you narrate the discovery to a friend and ask in wonder, who is it who was there before you, leaving behind him the table and the clock ? and suppose he were to reply that beyond all doubt no one had ever been there before, and that the table and the clock were the work of chance—chance products of nature in one of her wild freaks ; would you not look on him as a fool or as one trying to make a fool of you ? Nay, if all the men on earth were to offer the same explanation as he, would you not look on them in exactly the same light as you look on him ? And why ? Because your very nature inspires you with the most absolute certainty that wherever order reigns, wherever many things are disposed in mutual dependence so as to form one harmonious whole, there must have been a mind directing and disposing and arranging each and every one of the parts. When you find an intelligent design, your mind is forced to look for the intelligence that has designed it.

That such order, such harmony, such intelligent design, reigns throughout the whole universe, is a fact that admits of no doubt or denial. Let us, however, for the sake of example, consider a few of the wonders of magnitude, variety, order and harmony that are set forth by the cool, careful calculations of the strictest scientific investigation.

We have all a general idea of the magnitude of the earth ; yet

how tiny it becomes when we remember that it would take 1,234 planets the size of the earth to equal Jupiter, which seems but a speck in the sky ; it would take 1,270,000 bodies the size of the earth to equal the sun ; while it would take thirteen bodies the size of the sun to equal the star Sirius.

Again : light travels at the rate of about 180,000 miles a second ; yet in spite of this marvellous velocity, it takes about eight and a half minutes for a ray of light to travel from the sun to the earth, fourteen years to come from Sirius, thirty-one years from the Polar star, and it has been calculated that it would take about a million years for a ray of light to travel from the remotest of the stars to the earth.

As for the stars that stud the heavens, we may form some idea of their number from the fact that more than eighteen million distinct bodies have been counted in the Milky Way alone.

Yet in spite of their almost inconceivable magnitude, in spite of their almost infinite number, and in spite of the fact that each one of them is in constant motion, their movements and revolutions are regulated and controlled by the minutest laws, so that throughout the whole immensity of the heavens the most admirable order reigns ; side by side with that stupendous variety there is invariably found the most perfect unity, the most surprising simplicity, in virtue of which myriads of colossal bodies continue suspended and go on revolving in space without the remotest possibility of crash or accident. As for the importance of the movements of the heavenly bodies to the life of man, it will be sufficient to remember that of the two movements peculiar to the earth, one—its daily rotation round its axis—provides for an uninterrupted succession of day and night ; while the other—its annual revolution round the sun—accounts for the unvarying regularity of the seasons. How far-reaching is the influence of the heavenly bodies on human life in its most insignificant aspects will be sufficiently apparent to anyone who calls to mind, for instance, its rôle in the production of fresh water. Suppose the sun were to disappear some day or other ; the immediate result would be—no more heat, no more moisture, no more atmospheric currents, no more rain, no more rivers, no more streams, no more springs, no more water ; and silent death would at once replace the busy hum of human life that now peoples the globe.

Is it not as clear as noon-day, therefore, that on every page of the universe, so to say, there is written in letters as large as life the most incontestable evidence of intelligent design, and hence of a guiding, controlling mind ?

Ages ago the Hebrew Psalmist sang of how the works of God

show forth His glory ; and his thoughts have been re-echoed in more recent times by a great English writer (Addison) :—

“ The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue, ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens (a shining frame !)
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied sun from day to day,
Doth his Creator’s power display,
And publisheth to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

“ Soon as the evening shades prevail
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the list’ning earth
Repeats the story of her birth :
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

“ What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark, terrestrial ball :
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found
In reason’s ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
‘ The hand that made us is divine.’ ” ¹

¹ A similar train of reasoning underlies Moore’s beautiful song, “ Thou art, O God ! ” It is very interesting to compare both with the words put into St. Patrick’s mouth by Calderon, in his exquisite religious play, “ St. Patrick’s Purgatory ” :—

“ Thou art of all created things,
O Lord, the essence and the cause—
The source and centre of all bliss.
What are those veils of woven light,
Where sun and moon and stars unite—
The purple morn, the spangled night—
But curtains which Thy mercy draws
Between the heavenly world and this ?
The terrors of the sea and land—
When all the elements conspire,
The earth and water, storm and fire—
Are but the sketches of Thy hand ;
Do they not all in countless ways—
The lightning’s flash, the howling storm,
The dread volcano’s awful blaze—
Proclaim Thy glory and Thy praise ?

And this truth becomes all the more luminous when we consider the wonders of the human frame, the anatomy of which, from the hair of man's head to the sole of his feet, is a masterpiece of order and wisdom. Just as the sight of the mechanism of a clock—of the various pieces that communicate to the hands a regular movement marking out the hours and minutes—naturally leads us to the thought of an intelligent being who must have fashioned and arranged all its parts with a view to measuring time; and just as the admirable order which reigns in the world of stars and in the whole universe leads us to conclude with a thousand times more reason that this complex yet regular order must require a supreme and all-powerful intelligence; so it is impossible not to draw a similar conclusion from a study of the organs and members with which the human body is provided. The 246 bones of which the human frame is composed, the veins and arteries, the nerves and muscles, the tendons binding all the parts together; the lungs, the heart, the brain, distributing movement and life to every particle of the body; and finally, the eye, that perfect marvel—all combined point to an infinite intelligence that alone could plan and carry into execution so wondrous a work.

And, then, consider man, not merely as he is in himself, but in his relation to the world without him. Our body is less than an atom in comparison with the earth, the sea, the sun, the universe; yet even so it is not isolated, but is in intimate harmony with all nature. Thus the earth gives it the food which sustains it; and the earth is fertilized by water; and water falls from the regions of the air; and the air sustains the clouds; and the clouds are derived from sea and river, which are lifted up by the sun's heat and carried aloft to the clouds on the wings of the wind; and the air before entering my lungs is purified by the plants; and I in my turn restore it to the plants, having first transformed it into their natural food. In comparison with the universe I am a mere nothing, yet I act on the universe and it on me,—all are linked together by simple yet infallible

Beneath the sunny summer showers
Thy love assumes a milder form,
And writes its angel name in flowers.

The wind that flies with winged feet
Around the grassy gladdened earth,
Seems but commissioned to repeat
In echoed accents, silvery sweet,
That Thou, O Lord, didst give it birth.

There is a tongue in every flame,
There is a tongue in every wave—
To these the bounteous Godhead gave
These organs but to praise His Name!

O mighty Lord of boundless space,
Here can'st Thou be both sought and found;
For here in every thing around,
Thy presence and Thy power I trace."

laws: heat, motion, light, air, water, land, life,—all co-operate in producing order and the most perfect order and harmony side by side with the most varied diversity, so much so indeed, that death itself is the basis of life and supplies the elements thereof. He would be utterly devoid of reason who should attribute all these wonderful harmonies to the work of blind chance, and between chance and the intelligent, perfect, all-powerful mind, designing all, directing all, controlling all, there is no alternative.

Fifth Instruction on the Creed

ESSENCE AND INFINITE PERFECTION OF GOD

THOUGH this God, in whose existence we must believe, in conformity with the Act of Faith formulated in the first article of the Creed and with all the lights of reason itself, is infinitely above our feeble intelligence, we can, nevertheless, know Him to a certain extent, and the knowledge thus obtained is sufficient for the practical direction of our lives. Accordingly, I now proceed to speak of the essence of God, and to set forth His principal attributes, in a summary way at least, so as to give some idea of His unity, which we also profess in the first article of the Creed.

To understand in some sort what God is, we can make use of the arguments which reason suggests to us in proof of His existence. We are bound to confess that a God exists, because, as all other beings could not themselves be the cause of their own existence, we are of necessity compelled to fall back on a cause from which they derive their origin—to a cause which demands no other cause—in a word, a necessary and uncreated cause, which can be none other than God.

And examining this cause we are, of necessity, led by pure reason to discover the wonderful prerogatives or perfections of God, —if God necessarily exists of Himself, if He is the cause which has produced all else, He must consequently be the best and most perfect being that the mind of man is capable of conceiving.

Such, in fact, is the case ; and hence, God, speaking of Himself to Moses, gave Himself no other title than that of *Necessary Being* : *I am who am*—that is, Being by excellence, Being which necessarily exists, which cannot cease to exist, by which all things exist, and without which nothing could exist. In the same way, the Creed tells us nothing more of God than that He is the Omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth ; but since He is uncreated, since He is the principle and source of all things, it is not difficult for us to acquire a knowledge of His divine attributes.

What, then, are those attributes ? It would be an endless task to examine each and every one of them ; and, of course, it would be altogether out of place to enter into the many subtle questions, that

are discussed by theologians in reference to God. It will be sufficient, then, for us to dwell on His principal attributes.

Now, in our ordinary conversation we are accustomed to use ideas of time, of space, of capacity, potentiality, and so on, and to speak of *first, last, before, after*, and the like. But nothing of this kind can be used of God—He simply is,—in Him, there is no beginning, no end, no change from rest to activity, no before or after : God is of Himself ; and our ideas of Him must always represent Him, as a pure spirit, altogether immaterial, eternal, independent, immutable, immense, and infinitely perfect.

In the first place, I say that God is a *pure spirit*, most simple and immaterial, that is to say, an intelligence, a will, a spiritual substance, having neither body, nor shape, nor colour, and hence imperceptible by our senses. If God were composed of parts as we are, He would be subject to change, alteration and corruption—ideas absolutely incompatible with the divine nature.

There are, indeed, certain expressions in Sacred Scripture which would seem to attribute arms and eyes and feet to Him just as if He had a body like unto ours ; such expressions, however, must not be taken materially, but figuratively. Sacred Scripture borrows human language to accommodate itself to our weakness, and by such images simply intends to denote certain perfections of His ; for instance, by His hands omnipotence, by His eyes intelligence, by His feet His presence, and so on.

I say, in the second place, that He is *eternal*, that is to say, that He always has been and always will be ; that He had no beginning and shall have no end. For existing, as He does, by the very necessity of His being, He cannot have received that being from another ; nor can we imagine a single moment in which He has not been or can cease to be.

This attribute belongs to Him alone ; all things else are such by nature that they may or may not exist with equal indifference. Thus the world, having had a beginning, was, previous to its creation, in a state of continual non-existence ; and there is nothing to prevent its return to a similar state of non-existence but the sustaining hand of God.

True it is that our souls are immortal and shall live for ever ; but this is purely an effect of divine power and goodness ; for if God were but to remove His sustaining hand, they would return at once into their original nothingness. God alone, then, is a necessary Being, existing of Himself ; hence, of necessity, He embraces in Himself all times and all durations—nay, properly speaking, there is in Him neither past nor future, but one continuous, changeless, abiding present.

In the third place, I have said that He is *independent*, that is to say, that He depends on none, and that He does as He wills and when He wills, without ever being forced or constrained in His operations. For as He holds His Being from Himself alone, He is sufficient for Himself, and has need of none of His creatures ; whereas His creatures are in continual dependence on Him.

What we call the independence of the great ones of the earth is really only weakness and a state of more complete dependence,—for in reality they depend on all those whom they need in their service—they are even more dependent than others because of the fact that they require greater support to maintain their position. But God is perfectly independent, and needs neither help nor assistance to accomplish whatever He wills.

In the fourth place, I have said that God is *immutable*, that is to say, that He is not subject to any change, and that He is always in the same state,—being infinite in every kind of perfection He can neither gain anything nor lose anything. Every thing on earth is of its very nature changeable, variable, devoid of stability. We ourselves are always in a state of perpetual change—change in age, in thought, in wish, in inclination—ever subject to a thousand vicissitudes in soul and body. Not so is it with God: *I am the Lord, and I do not change*. He is ever unalterably the same in being, in thought, in volition, in affection.

All the changes to which we might suppose God to be subject, such as when He created the world, when He became man, when He daily wrought so many wonderful miracles,—all these and many of like nature which appear new to us, imply no modification in God ; because in Him there is no new deliberation or decision changing that which went before, but a simple, immutable determination effecting successively in time what He had disposed and decreed from all eternity. It is, then, in His creatures and not in God Himself that the change takes place.

You thus see how we are to understand those expressions of Sacred Scripture which attribute to God certain feelings and affections analogous to our own, such, for instance, as when He is said to be sad, or to be angry, or to forget. All such expressions are mere metaphors borrowed from what we feel or experience in similar circumstances. In Him there is not, and cannot be, any perturbation of soul, any change, any emotion, simply because He is immutable: *I am the Lord, and I do not change*.

In the fifth place I have said that He is *immense*—that is to say, that by His essence He is present in all places—in heaven, on earth, in the depths of the sea. He occupies all, fills all, without being

Himself contained by any place. Hence the Psalmist has said : *Whither shall I go from Thy spirit, and whither shall I fly from Thy face ?*

You must not, however, imagine that God is everywhere in the same way as the air we breathe, for though this is diffused everywhere, it is in such a way that the air that is in one place is not found in another. God, as we have seen, is infinitely simple, is not composed of parts ; and consequently He is whole and entire wherever He is, somewhat in the same way as the soul is whole and entire in the whole body and in each of its parts. And just as the soul, pervading the whole body, sustains it, preserves it, gives it life, movement, action, so the presence of God in all things, far from being inoperative, is in perpetual activity.

God is intimately present in all beings to sustain and preserve them, so much so that if He withheld His hand for a single instant they would at once cease to exist. Therefore it was that the Apostle said : *In Him we live and move and have our being*, so much so that without His actual concurrence we could not move even a finger. A great truth this, a truth which carefully borne in mind should prove a powerful restraint against evil—to remember that God is always present to us in all the glory of His majesty and all the might of His power ! Who that dwells on this thought can ever bring himself to such a state of folly, audacity, and madness as to offend Him by sin ?

But though God is essentially in all places, Holy Scripture usually assigns His dwelling place to Heaven : *The Lord hath prepared His seat in heaven* ; and this for two reasons : (1) Because He there surrounds Himself with greater pomp than elsewhere, raising up the blessed to the contemplation of His being, so that it may properly be said that in heaven He has established His throne and displays the magnificence of His court ; (2) to give to us a sublime idea of that sovereign majesty which, having its throne in high heaven's dome, looks down therefrom on us who are but so many miserable worms encumbering the earth.

Finally, I have said that God is infinitely perfect in every way. What perfection can be wanting to Him who contains the plenitude of being, and by whom alone all things that are exist ? He must, then, be infinitely truthful, wise, just, powerful, merciful, holy—nay, to speak more correctly, He is Truth itself, Wisdom itself, Justice itself, Power itself, Mercy itself, Holiness itself, and so on, with all the other perfections. The sum total of whatever perfection is found in creatures is no more than a spark of that which is found in God in an infinite degree, nor can there be any perfection in

creatures except in so far as they are in conformity with Him, who is the Model, the Rule, the Source,—nay, the very Essence,—of perfection. To avoid being too long I may omit a detailed examination of each of the attributes mentioned just now, which in any event are more sensible and easily understood; but I cannot dispense myself from speaking later on of His omnipotence and providence.

Such, then, is the idea, imperfect though it is, which we are able to form of God. And yet after having said of Him all that we know of what is great and magnificent, we have said simply nothing—for God is infinitely superior to all that we can feel, imagine, or conceive. We can believe in Him, adore Him, love Him, we can even possess Him; but we cannot ever hope to have an adequate idea, a comprehensive knowledge, of Him—and least of all in our present state. But should we be so happy as to be numbered amongst the saved, then, indeed, the veil that hides Him from our eyes shall be one day lifted, and we shall see Him as He is, openly and face to face: *We shall see Him as He is.*¹

The little that we have said, however, suffices to indicate another essential truth, which is, that there can be only one God, and that it is altogether impossible that there can be more than one, This we declare in the first words of the Creed: *I believe in God*, by which we not only profess our belief in the existence of God, but, furthermore, we declare that He is the one true God, and that there can be no other God than He, as is stated still more expressly in the Creed which is recited at Mass: *I believe in one God.*

This truth also is supported by faith and reason alike. *By faith*, since God Himself attests it in several passages of Sacred Scripture: *See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God besides Me.*² From which is deduced the obligation we are under of giving our homage and adoration to Him alone: *The one God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.*

By reason, also; for, since God contains in Himself every possible good without any limit whatever, He must of necessity be one,—otherwise He would not have all perfections and consequently would not be God.

Let us dwell for a moment on this consideration. Could you call yourself absolute master of your own house if it had other masters besides you? Would not their ownership be a limit, an obstacle, to yours? Supposing for a moment that there are several gods,—they must all be equal; for if any one of them were inferior to the others he would cease to be God. But if all were equal none of them

¹ 1 John iii. 2.

² Deut. xxxii. 39.

would be infinitely perfect, since one would not have the perfections possessed by others ; none would be truly absolute sovereign, since the one would be dependent on the others ; none would be immense, since where one is the others could not be ; none consequently could be God. Hence you see that it is just as essential for God to be one as it is for Him to be independent, immense, infinite ; that to multiply the divinity is to destroy Him ; and that to admit more gods than one is just the same as to admit none at all : “ If God is not one,” said Tertullian, “ there is no God.”

Let us hold for certain, then, that God is one—essentially, necessarily one ; and that in this, His incomparable unity, as in a fathomless abyss, He contains all perfections—which perfections, though distinguished and reckoned separately by our feeble understanding, which is incapable of grasping the essence of God in one undivided thought, are none the less a single essence, infinitely simple—so that in God one perfection is not really distinct from another—everything that is in God is God Himself, neither more nor less.

The fruit to be drawn from this instruction should be a resolution to try and imprint deeply in our minds a high idea of this great God, our first beginning, our last end, and the absolute Lord of all things. *Lord, who is like unto Thee?* the Psalmist cried out in his astonishment, all absorbed in the contemplation of the Divine Being. Thou, O Lord, art essentially all, and we essentially a mere nothing,—nothing, indeed, must each of us be regarded in comparison with the sum total of creation ; at best we are a grain of sand that no one regards, no one troubles about, no one notices its disappearance. And if this be so, what is each of us in comparison with God, before whom the very immensity of the world, and a thousand other worlds, if so many existed, would be exactly as if they were not : *All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing and vanity.*¹

On this attentive consideration of God depend the homage, the submission, the cordial and unfailing worship we are bound to render him by bowing down before this Immensity that surrounds us, adoring this Providence that governs us, loving this Goodness that helps and bears with us, and fearing this Justice that can strike and destroy us.

Thence also the necessity of being perfectly resigned to His Holy Will, bearing in mind that all comes from Him, and that all is ordained by Him according to the adorable, though mysterious, designs of His wisdom ; and hence, too, the necessity of being calm and patient

¹ Is. xl. 17.

in the midst of life's vicissitudes, and of being guided in all things by God, just as the flocks by their master, to use the comparison employed by David: *I am become as a beast before Thee: and I am always with Thee.*¹

Hence, too, we learn to refer ourselves and our all to God, from whom we know we have received all, so that all may return to Him and sing His glory; and hence to consecrate unreservedly to the Lord our body, our soul, our talents, our possessions, our life, our health, and all the occupations imposed on us by the transitory ties of this life.

And, finally, we hence learn to despise the things of here below which pass and vanish like a shadow, and to attach ourselves to Him alone, the true and sovereign good, the immutable, unfailling, eternal good: *In the beginning, O Lord, Thou foundest the earth: and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish but Thou remainest: and all of them shall grow old like a garment: and as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art always the self-same, and Thy years shall not fail.*²

Oh, by how great and how many impulses shall we find ourselves incessantly urged towards God, if we only conceive the just idea we ought to have of Him. Hence it was that St. Augustine's one prayer was: "Let me know Thee as Thou art, let me know myself as I am." The knowledge of God leads us to a genuine knowledge of ourselves; and from this combined knowledge proceeds the true and holy direction of our whole lives.

Meditate over and over again, therefore, on this great God so as to draw thence a continual stimulus and impulse towards loving and serving Him. And thus this God who is now the object of our faith, and therefore of our worship, will become one day the object of that clear, beatific vision which is nothing else than love, joy, and bliss eternal.

¹ Ps. lxxii. 23.

² Ps. ci. 26-28.

Sixth Instruction on the Creed

TRINITY AND OMNIPOTENCE

AFTER having said *I believe in God*, we immediately add : *The Father Almighty*. These two words, *Father* and *Almighty*, will form the subject of the present instruction.

I. To begin with the first, the name of "Father," which we give to God, is, according to the teaching of the Roman Catechism, an affirmation of the adorable, incomprehensible mystery of the Blessed Trinity. This God who, as we have seen, is one, essentially simple and immaterial in His nature, comprises in Himself three distinct Persons ; and although the First Person is not the Second, nor the Second the Third, yet these Three Persons are only one nature, one essence, one God.

In God there is nothing more wonderful than the Trinity of Persons side by side with the Unity of Nature. It is a mystery we could never have discovered without the light of divine revelation. That there is a God, an infinitely perfect Being, the First Origin of all things, having existence of Himself, and giving it to all things outside Himself, and that this God is necessarily one—this truth, indeed, we could discover by our natural powers. But that this one God subsists in Three Persons really distinct, yet having only one indivisible nature, so that between them there is neither superiority, nor dependence, nor any inequality of time, dignity or perfection—this is a mystery which faith alone makes known to us.

Yet although obscure and inscrutable as is this mystery, it can never be shown to involve any impossibility or contradiction, such as would certainly be the case had we to believe that three Persons make only one Person, or that three Gods make but one God. But such is not our belief ; we believe God to be one, not three, in His essence ; and hence we believe in one God not in three Gods. On the other hand, we believe that God is three, not one, in Person ; hence we believe in three Persons and not one Person alone. How the same God, one in essence, can be three in Person, is what we do not and cannot comprehend, because we have not a clear and distinct idea of what is nature and what is person. It is, then, a mystery

—a mystery which, like many other equally inscrutable mysteries, we must humbly adore, not curiously pry into.

This much being laid down, let us now see who are these Persons ? They are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as Jesus Christ Himself teaches. It is of the First Person alone that mention is made in the first article of the Creed ; and hence this instruction shall be confined to this First Person.

No one takes the name of *father* who has not at least one son. Since the first Person is called *Father* He must have a son, the true and natural offspring of His substance. Such precisely is the case ; and it is of this Son—the Second Person—that we say in the second article : *And in Jesus Christ, His only Son.*

But how does there take place in the Father that generation by which He is called, and really is, Father—that is to say generator,—and is distinguished from the Son, that is to say, the Begotten ? Here we must stop and seek no further : *Who shall declare His generation ?*¹ If there ever was a subject on which we should forbid ourselves all curious research, all vain discussion, and rely on faith alone, assuredly it is this. Let it suffice for us to know that in God there is a real generation, in virtue of which He who generates is called Father and He who is generated, the Son,—both of which truths are clearly indicated in Sacred Scripture ; but let us not pry too closely into the mode of this generation, because not even the whole universe can furnish us with an image or resemblance capable of explaining it.

I must not, however, omit to set before you what the Fathers and spiritual writers say with a view to throwing some light on the subject. God, being infinitely perfect, necessarily knows Himself from all eternity ; now in contemplating Himself from all eternity in the incomparable mirror of His divinity, He produces an image perfectly resembling Himself. Now, this Being who knows Himself is the Father, who proceeds from no other, and who is the principle of the other Persons ; this knowledge which God has of Himself is the Son who proceeds from the Father, and is begotten of Him ; while from both together, by a bond of mutual love and affection, proceeds the Holy Ghost, as we shall see in the eighth article.

Thus you see that God generates the Son in a manner altogether incomprehensible to us and altogether different from human generation, and by the sole power of His understanding ; and in generating the Son God communicates to Him His whole undivided essence, with all His perfections. The Father, then, is one with the Son, and is

¹ Is. liii. 8.

neither more perfect nor older than He. He is not more perfect, because in generating Him He transmits to Him His own substance ; nor is He older, for the generation is from eternity, and the Father has never been a single instant without knowing Himself, and hence without generating His divine Son. Between these two Persons, then, there is no difference whatever, unless this, that the First Person is called and really is Father, because He engenders, while the Second is called, and really is Son, because He is begotten. In the same way the distinctive character of the Third Person is, as we shall see in the proper place, that He proceeds from both Father and Son by way of love.

Since I am speaking of a mystery you must not accuse me of obscurity. But even though it is a mystery we must not on that account shirk all mention of it, especially as it is one of the principal articles of our faith. We should give thanks to God for all He has deigned to let us know about Himself ; while as for those truths which we cannot comprehend, we should humbly believe and adore them, hoping in Him, and so ordering our lives that it may be given us to see the mist one day dispersed which now hides from our eyes the inaccessible glory of God, His nature, and the mystery of His fecundity in the procession of the Divine Persons.

Though the name of Father which we give to God in the first article of the Creed, has reference principally to His only Son, whom He has engendered by nature, and therefore denotes the First Person of the Blessed Trinity ; yet it also applies to Him in reference to us, His creatures.

For besides being by nature Father of His only Begotten Son, He is also our Father, by creation and by adoption. In this sense the name of the Father is not confined to the First Person alone, but applies also to the other two Persons, inasmuch as all that God does in His external manifestations is but one single, indivisible operation of the august Trinity. God is Father by creation, because He has given being to all creatures, and because He unfailingly maintains and preserves them, so much so that He provides food and sustenance for even the lowest and tiniest insect. This paternal care which He takes of His creatures entitles Him to be called in a certain sense the Father of all things, but especially of rational creatures, such as men created to His image and likeness.

But as regards us Christians, He is our Father in a particular manner,—not merely by creation, but also by adoption ; for at the happy moment of our baptism He adopted us as His true children, imprinted the character thereof on our souls, and thereby gave us the right to a share in the inheritance of Jesus Christ : *For the*

Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God ; and if sons heirs also ¹ This adoption is renewed in us as often as we receive in the sacrament of Penance the sanctifying grace lost by our sins.

And what a wonderful adoption ! It elevates us to the supernatural order, makes us *sharers of the Divine Nature*,² and gives us by grace what Jesus Christ has by nature. True, we are not, as He is, God's children by nature ; but what does this matter if God regards us as His children and calls us to a share in His Divine kingdom as brethren of Jesus Christ ? What are all the dignities, the honours, the riches, of this world in comparison with this Divine sonship ? Ah ! if we but knew it well, and understood its sublime value, would we not prize it above every other thing, and do all in our power to recover it if lost by sin, and jealously to guard it if we are so happy as still to possess it ? But we shall have occasion to return to this important point before long.

II. Having now explained, in its various significations, the title of Father which is given to God, let us next proceed to examine the second title given Him in the Creed—that of Omnipotent. Two points have to be considered :

First, why is Almighty power attributed to the Father ? Is it because it resides in Him alone, to the exclusion of the other two Persons ? By no means ; they have the same Almighty power, just as they have the same substance. It is attributed to the Father by a sort of appropriation, just as wisdom is attributed to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Ghost. The reason of such appropriation is deduced from the necessary order of the Divine emanations. Thus, Almighty power is attributed to the Father because He is the principle of the other two Persons ; wisdom to the Son, because He is begotten by the intelligence of the Father ; goodness to the Holy Ghost, because He is the mutual and substantial love of Father and Son. As for the rest, each Person is equally powerful, equally wise, equally good, since each possesses the same identical, indivisible nature.

But, you may say, of all the perfections of God, why is Omnipotence alone made mention of in the Creed ? Simply because of all perfections it is the most sensible, the clearest, and best adapted to the average intelligence. All do not understand in an equal degree what is meant when we say of God that He is infinite, immense, immutable, independent ; but the most ignorant and least instructed mind can understand what it means to be able to do all He wishes

¹ Rom. viii. 16, 17.

² 2 Peter i. 4.

without hindrance or difficulty. Moreover, this attribute is well chosen to dispose us to believe in the great and wondrous mysteries that follow. Once you believe in an omnipotent God there can be no difficulty in believing in the instantaneous production of all things ; in the union of two natures infinitely different—the divine and the human—in the one Person of Jesus Christ ; in His Resurrection and triumphal Ascension into heaven ; the miraculous reconstruction and renovation of our bodies at the last day ; and the many other sublime, ineffable truths contained in the Creed. All that is fully accounted for by the power of the Creator : *No word shall be impossible with God.*¹

This much being borne in mind, in what does this Omnipotence consist ? The answer has been given already. God is said to be Almighty, because He can do all He wills ; because there is nothing that can oppose, contradict, or resist His will ; because to do a thing is the same to Him as to will it ; because He is absolute Lord of all things, and over all things exercises His dominion. Such, then, is the idea we should form of His Omnipotence : *He hath done all things whatsoever He would.*²

We must not, however, on this account imagine that God can do anything repugnant to His Being. Though He is Omnipotent He can neither sin, nor lie, nor die ; yet He does not thereby cease to be Omnipotent,—nay, it is precisely because of His Omnipotence that He can do none of those things, which are in truth the effect of weakness and misery, not of virtue, power, and might. In a word, the attributes of God must be in keeping with one another, and must not destroy each other. If He could sin, where would His sanctity be ? If He could die, where would His eternity be, and where His immutability ? Yes, God can do all He wills ; but He does not will and cannot will anything that is repugnant to His Being.

To conclude this instruction by some practical and appropriate reflections, the two words here explained—*Father* and *Almighty*—ought to inspire us with great confidence in God accompanied by a holy and salutary fear.

He is our Father—He has, therefore, bowels of tenderness and mercy for us ; He has the irresistible inclination of infinite goodness to do us good, to help and succour us ; and hence it is that Jesus Christ forbids us to call anyone by the name of father in comparison with God : *Call none your father upon earth,*³ because in comparison with Him none deserves the name. But if He wishes to assist us as a Father, a most loving Father, He is able as Omnipotent to do so, because He has all things in His power and disposes of all at His pleasure.

¹ Luke i. 37.² Ps. cxlii.³ Matt. xxiii. 9.

There is no place, then, for diffidence, anxiety, or fear. Whatever our circumstances—be we in want, distress, or affliction, let our condition seem ever so desperate, and beyond the reach of human resource—we must not lose courage. Let us confidently have recourse to God, as to our Father, in all our wants and dangers, in every ill of soul and body, and He will never fail to console us and make us experience the effects of His paternal goodness and of His Divine power. The one thing essential is to behave towards Him as His true children. Acting otherwise we not only lose all right to trust in Him as our Father, but we also expose ourselves to the danger of provoking against us one who is our all-powerful sovereign—a thought that should fill us with fear and dread.

It is not easy to decide whether to laugh at or to weep over the boldness and temerity with which many pretend to raise their heads and contend against God—to use the expression of Sacred Scripture : *He hath strengthened himself against the Almighty*—violating His law, freely offending Him, making no account of Him. What a monstrous idea ! for, in comparison with God, we are infinitely less than an ant is in comparison with us, since it is something in comparison with us, whereas we and the whole world together are nothing in comparison with Him : *All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all* ;¹ and yet we have the boldness to measure our strength against God, and to try to prevail over Him ! Can He not, when He wills, make us the objects of His direst weapons, the cruellest afflictions, the saddest misfortunes ? And if He does not do so always, is it because He lacks the power and the strength ? Or is it not rather an effect of His long-suffering patience, of that infinite mercy which prefers to treat us as a Father rather than as a Supreme Avenger ? Nor will this thought render us disdainful towards Him. Ought it not, on the contrary, to render Him more dear and venerable in our eyes ?

Ah ! if each sin was immediately followed by chastisement, if God straightway withered the tongue of the blasphemer, paralyzed the arm of the assassin and the thief, and rendered powerless the limbs of the impure, as He has sometimes done, to inspire salutary fear, He would assuredly be much more respected, and people would avoid sin or would at least commit it with less freedom. But because God loves to show Himself patient and merciful rather than just and severe, because He preserves silence, bears with us and forgives us, instead of deriving therefrom a reason for loving Him, we take advantage of the fact to offend Him with greater freedom and security. What an unworthy proceeding, what dreadful ingratitude !

¹ Is. xl. 17.

Finally, we ought to remember that patience long abused turns to anger, and that the Divine goodness, growing weary at last, lays up a store of wrath and vengeance which will one day or another burst out fiercely. If the other reflections do not suffice to hold us to our duty, let us be at least sensible to the thought of the Divine Omnipotence which is ever accompanied and directed by justice, and let us fear to provoke Him against us: *Be you humbled therefore, under the mighty hand of God,*¹ says St. Peter. And Jesus Christ Himself in the Gospel tells us: *Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul into hell.*²

In the various vicissitudes of life, and particularly when we are tempted to rebel against God, let us say with the Psalmist: *Who shall not fear Thee, O King of the nations*; let us repeat what the chaste Joseph opposed to the criminal invitation of the wife of Putiphar: *How can I bring myself to this evil, and to sin against my Lord*; or let us recall the chaste Susanna, who, tempted by two infamous old men, and if she refused to yield threatened with an ignominious accusation by which she was to be robbed both of life and honour, replied: *It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.*

Such are the practical conclusions to be drawn from the belief we profess in God the Father Almighty; such the sentiments that it should excite in us—on the one hand, firm, unlimited, unshaken confidence; and on the other, a profound and salutary fear and dread of Him as an Omnipotent Lord who should never be provoked. Blessed shall we be if we always know how to act according to these principles and maxims.

¹ 1 Peter v. 6.

² Matt. x. 28.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED—*Continued*

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

V.—CREATOR OF HEAVEN

16.—How and why
God created
Heaven and
Earth.

How necessary it was to give the faithful some notion of an Almighty God will be readily understood from what we have now to say regarding the creation of the universe. For the miracle of so wondrous a work will be much more readily accepted once no room is left for doubt as to the infinite power of the Creator.

Now, it was not from pre-existing material that God fashioned the world; He brought it forth out of nothing, without constraint or necessity, but purely of His own free will. The only motive that determined Him to the work of creation was His desire to impart and communicate His goodness to the beings He was about to produce. For the nature of God, supremely happy in itself, stands not in need of anything, as David proclaims. *I have said to the Lord, Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods.*¹

And as He is only influenced by His own goodness when *He hath done all things whatsoever He would*; so in creating the universe, He followed no model or design outside Himself; but as the exemplar of all things is contained in His divine intelligence, it was simply by contemplating this type within Himself, and, so to say, by reproducing it, that the Divine Architect, with that supreme wisdom and infinite power which belong to Him alone, created the whole universe in the beginning: *For He spoke and they were made; He commanded and they were created.*²

17.—Meaning of
Heaven and
Earth.

By the words, *heaven and earth*, must be understood all that heaven and earth contain. For, besides the heavens, which the Prophet calls *the work of His fingers*,³ He also gave to the sun its splendour, and their beauty to the moon and the other heavenly bodies, which were to serve *for signs and for seasons and for days and for years*;⁴ and it was He also who ordered the heavenly

¹ Ps. xv. 2.² Ps. cxlviii. 5.³ Ps. viii. 4.⁴ Gen. i. 14.

bodies in so certain and regular a course that nothing can be imagined more varied than their perpetual revolutions, nothing more fixed than their variety.

18.—Creation of the Angels. He also created out of nothing the spiritual world, the countless hosts of angels, to serve as His ministers and assistants, whom He enriched and adorned with wondrous gifts of His grace and of His power. When Sacred Scripture tells us that *the devil stood not in the truth*,¹ it gives us clearly to understand that he and the other fallen angels were gifted with grace in the beginning of their existence. On this St. Augustine writes as follows: "God created the angels with an upright will, that is, with a pure love, which united them to Him—thus communicating to them at one and the same time both being and grace. Hence we must conclude that the holy angels have never been without uprightness of will, that is, the love of God."

As to their knowledge, here is the testimony of Sacred Scripture: *Thou Lord, my King, art wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to understand all things upon earth*.²

Regarding their power, the inspired David speaks of them as *mighty in strength, executing His word*,³ and on this account they are often named in Sacred Scripture *the powers* and the *hosts of the Lord*.⁴

But although all were adorned with these heavenly gifts, yet many of them having rebelled against God their Father and Creator were cast out from their glorious mansions, and imprisoned within the earth in dismal dungeons where they suffer the punishment due to their pride. Of these does the Prince of the Apostles thus write: *He spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, into torments, to be reserved into judgment*.⁵

VI.—AND OF EARTH

19.—The Creation of the Earth.

God also founded the earth on its basis, and by His word He fixed it in the middle of the universe: *He made the mountains ascend, the plains descend unto the places which He founded for them*; and, lest the violence of the waters should inundate the earth, *He set a bound which they shall not pass over; neither shall they return to cover*

¹ John viii. 44. ² 2 Kings xiv. 20. ³ Ps. cii. 20. ⁴ Ps. cii. 21. ⁵ 2 Peter ii. 4.

*the earth.*¹ Then, He not only clothed and adorned it with trees and every kind of plant and flower, but He filled it with living creatures of every species, as He had already done for sea and air.

20.—The Creation of Man. Lastly, from the slime of the earth, He formed man, whom He so constituted in body as to be immortal and impassible, not indeed by virtue of human nature itself, but as a favour all divine. While as regards his soul *He formed it to His own image and likeness*; endowed it with free will; and so moulded all the movements and desires of his heart, as to subject them at all times to the dominion of reason. To this He also added the admirable gift of original justice; and finally He gave him dominion over all animals.

To instruct the faithful in all these truths, the pastor will easily find the necessary material in the sacred pages of the Book of Genesis.

21.—God the Creator of all things visible and invisible. The words, *heaven and earth*, then, must be understood to apply to the creation of all things, as the Prophet had pointed out in these few words: *Thine are the heavens and Thine is the earth: the world and the fulness thereof Thou hast founded.*² And still more briefly the Fathers of the Council of Nice expressed the same thing by the addition of the simple words, *of all things, visible and invisible*, to the Nicene Creed. For all that is contained in the universe, all that we recognize to be the work of God, either falls under the senses and is called visible, or is an object of mental perception and is expressed by the word *invisible*.

VII.—GOD'S PROVIDENCE

22.—Things created by the power of God cannot subsist without His government and Providence. In confessing, however, that God is the Creator and Author of all things, we must not imagine that His work, when accomplished and completed, could continue to exist without the aid of His infinite power. As all things derive their being from the supreme power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator, so also if His unceasing providence were not constantly at hand, and if He did not preserve

¹ Ps. ciii. 9 *sqq.*

² Ps. lxxxviii. 12.

His work by that same power which He employed to form it in the beginning, it would at once return to nothingness ; as Sacred Scripture declares when it says : *How could anything endure if Thou wouldst not ? or be preserved if not called by Thee ?*¹

23.—The action of Secondary Causes. And not only does God sustain and govern all existing things by His providence, but it is He who in reality communicates movement and action to whatever moves or acts ; and this in such a way that without hindering the agency of secondary causes, He yet directs and helps them. His most subtle influence extends to all things, and, as the wise man testifies : *He reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things secretly*²—which made the Apostle say, when preaching to the Athenians of the God whom without knowing they adored : *He is not far from every one of us ; for in Him we live and move and have our being.*³

24.—Creation the work of the Three Persons. So much regarding the First Article of the Creed ; but before concluding, it will be necessary to observe that the work of creation is common to the Three Persons of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. In accordance with the teaching of the Apostles, we here confess that the Father is *Creator of heaven and earth* ; yet on the other hand, we also read of the Son in Sacred Scripture, that *all things were made by Him* ;⁴ and of the Holy Ghost, that *the spirit of God moved over the waters* ;⁵ and : *By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the spirit of His mouth.*⁶

¹ Wis. xl. 26. ² Wis. viii. 1. ³ Acts xvii. 27. ⁴ John i. 3. ⁵ Gen. i. 2. ⁶ Ps. xxxii. 6.

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED—*Continued*

2. ON THE CREATION

Q. What is meant by the words :
Creator of heaven and earth ?

A. To create means to make out of nothing ; hence, God is called the Creator of heaven and of earth, because He made heaven and earth and all things contained therein, that is, the whole Universe, out of nothing.

Q. Was the world created by the Father alone ?

A. The world was created by all the Three Divine Persons, because whatever one Person does with regard to creatures is done by the other two Persons in one and the selfsame act.

Q. Why then is creation specially attributed to the Father ?

A. Creation is specially attributed to the Father because creation is a work of Divine Omnipotence, which is specially attributed to the Father, just as wisdom is attributed to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Ghost, though all three Persons possess the same Omnipotence, Wisdom, and Goodness.

Q. Does God take any interest

in the world and in the things created by Him ?

A. Yes, God takes an interest in the world and in all things created by Him ; He preserves them, and governs them by His infinite goodness and wisdom ; and nothing happens here below that He does not either will or permit.

Q. Why do you say that nothing happens here below that He does not either will or permit ?

A. We say that nothing happens here below that He does not either will or permit, because there are some things which God wills and commands, while there are others which He simply does not prevent, such as sin.

Q. Why does not God prevent sin ?

A. God does not prevent sin, because even from the very abuse man makes of the liberty with which He is endowed, God knows how to bring forth good and to make His mercy or His justice become more and more resplendent.

3. THE ANGELS

Q. Which are the noblest of God's creatures ?

A. The noblest creatures created by God are the Angels.

Q. Who are the Angels ?

A. The Angels are intelligent and purely spiritual creatures.

Q. Why did God create the Angels ?

A. God created the Angels so as to be honoured and served by them, and to render them eternally happy.

Q. What form and figure have the Angels ?

A. The Angels have neither form nor material figure of any kind, because they are pure spirits created by God in such a way as to exist without having to be united to a body.

Q. Why then are the angels represented under sensible forms ?

A. The Angels are represented under sensible forms : (1) as a help to our imagination ; and (2) because they have thus appeared many times to men, as we read in Sacred Scripture.

Q. Were all the angels faithful to God ?

A. No, the Angels were not all faithful to God ; many of them through pride claimed to be His equals and independent of Him,—for which sin they were banished for ever from Paradise and condemned to hell.

Q. How are the Angels called who were banished for ever from Paradise and condemned to hell ?

A. The Angels banished for ever from Paradise and condemned to hell are called demons, and their chief is called Lucifer or Satan.

Q. Can the demons do us any harm ?

A. Yes, the demons can do us great harm both in soul and body, especially by tempting us to sin, provided God permits them to do so.

Q. Why do they tempt us ?

A. The demons tempt us because of the envy they bear us, which makes them desire our eternal

damnation ; and because of their hatred of God, whose image is reflected in us. God on the other hand permits these temptations in order that we may overcome them by His grace, and thus practise virtue and acquire merit for Heaven.

Q. How are temptations conquered ?

A. Temptations are conquered by watchfulness, prayer and Christian mortification.

Q. How are the angels called who remained faithful to God ?

A. The Angels who remained faithful to God are called the good Angels, heavenly Spirits, or simply Angels.

Q. What became of the Angels who remained faithful to God ?

A. The Angels who remained faithful to God were confirmed in grace, for ever enjoy the vision of God, love Him, bless Him, and praise Him eternally.

Q. Does God use the Angels as His ministers ?

A. Yes, God uses the Angels as His ministers, and especially does He entrust to many of them the office of acting as our guardians and protectors.

Q. Should we have a particular devotion to our Guardian Angel ?

A. Yes, we should have a particular devotion to our Guardian Angel ; we should honour him, invoke his aid, follow his inspirations, and be grateful to him for the continual assistance he affords us.

4. MAN

Q. Which is the noblest creature God has placed on earth ?

A. The noblest creature God has placed on earth is man.

Q. What is man ?

A. Man is a rational creature composed of soul and body.

Q. What is the soul ?

A. The soul is the noblest part of man, because it is a spiritual substance, endowed with intelligence and will, capable of knowing God and of possessing Him for all eternity.

Q. Can the human soul be seen and touched ?

A. Our soul can neither be seen nor touched, because it is a spirit.

Q. Does the human soul die with the body ?

A. The human soul never dies ; faith and our very reason prove that it is immortal.

Q. Is man free in his actions ?

A. Yes, man is free in his actions ; and each one feels within himself that he can do a thing or leave it undone, or do one thing rather than another.

Q. Explain human liberty by an example.

A. If I voluntarily tell a lie, I know that I could have left it unsaid or that I could have remained silent, and that, on the other hand, I could also speak differently and tell the truth.

Q. Why do we say that man was created to the image and likeness of God ?

A. We say that man was created to the image and likeness of God because the human soul is spiritual and rational, free in its operations, capable of knowing and loving God and of enjoying Him for ever—perfections which reflect a ray of the infinite greatness of the Lord in us.

Q. In what state did God place our first parents, Adam and Eve ?

A. God placed our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the state of innocence and grace ; but they soon fell away by sin.

Q. Besides innocence and sanctifying grace did God confer any other gifts on our first parents ?

A. Besides innocence and sanctifying grace, God conferred on our first parents other gifts, which, along with sanctifying grace, they were to transmit to their descendants ; these were : *integrity*, that is, the perfect subjection of sense to reason : *immortality* ; *immunity* from all pain and sorrow ; and a *knowledge* in keeping with their state.

Q. What was the nature of Adam's sin ?

A. Adam's sin was a sin of pride and of grave disobedience.

Q. What chastisement was meted out to the sin of Adam and Eve ?

A. Adam and Eve lost the grace of God and the right they had to Heaven ; they were driven out of the earthly Paradise, subjected to many miseries of soul and body, and condemned to death.

Q. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, would they have been exempt from death ?

A. If Adam and Eve had not sinned and if they had remained faithful to God, they would, after a happy and tranquil sojourn here on earth, and without dying, have been transferred by God into Heaven, to enjoy a life of unending glory.

Q. Were these gifts due to man ?

A. These gifts were in no way due to man, but were absolutely gratuitous and supernatural ; and hence, when Adam disobeyed the divine command, God could without any injustice deprive both Adam and his posterity of them.

Q. Is this sin proper to Adam alone ?

A. This sin is not Adam's sin alone, but it is also our sin, though in a different sense. It is Adam's sin because he committed it by an act of his will, and hence in him it was a personal sin. It is

our sin also because Adam, having committed it in his capacity as the head and source of the human race, it was transmitted by natural generation to all his descendants: and hence in us it is original sin.

Q. How is it possible for original sin to be transmitted to all men?

A. Original sin is transmitted to all men because God, having conferred sanctifying grace and other supernatural gifts on the human race in Adam, on the condition that Adam should not disobey Him; and Adam having disobeyed, as head and father of the human race, rendered human nature rebellious against God. And hence, human nature is transmitted to all the descendants of Adam in a state of rebellion against God, and deprived of divine grace and other gifts.

Q. Do all men contract original sin?

A. Yes, all men contract original sin, with the exception of the Blessed Virgin, who was preserved from it by a singular privilege of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Q. Could not men be saved after Adam's sin?

A. After Adam's sin men could not be saved, if God had not shown mercy towards them.

Q. What was the mercy shown by God to the human race?

A. The mercy shown by God to the human race was that of immediately promising Adam a divine Redeemer or Messiah, and of sending this Messiah in His own good time to free men from the slavery of sin and of the devil.

Q. Who is the promised Messiah?

A. The promised Messiah is Jesus Christ, as the second article of the *Creed* teaches.

Seventh Instruction on the Creed

ON CREATION

ONE of the effects in which the omnipotence of God stands out most prominently is the creation of all things. Hence, after the words *Father Almighty*, already explained, the Creed immediately adds: *Creator of heaven and earth*. On this great work of creation I now proceed to speak; but I shall do so as briefly as possible, limiting myself to the points that are most important and most necessary to be known, and avoiding the many deep and abstruse questions naturally arising out of so vast a subject. First of all, however, you must bear in mind that the work of creation is attributed to the Father in the same sense as is omnipotence, that is to say, because He is the principle of the other persons, and consequently the source of all power. As for the rest, I have only to repeat that external manifestations are common to each of the three Persons, inasmuch as each possesses the same indivisible nature.

This much being borne in mind, the word *create* signifies to make out of nothing, to give being to that which is not. Now as between being and non-being there is an infinite distance, it follows that creation is the work of an infinite power, and hence a work belonging to God alone. We can, indeed, fashion one thing out of another; we can build a house by working on stones, lime, wood—things that already exist—and by assigning them a new order; but we cannot create. Nay, even if all the monarchs of the universe were to combine their resources, could they ever succeed in making out of nothing as much as a single straw or one grain of sand? God alone can draw forth countless creatures from nothing, as from an inexhaustible mine, with no more labour than that of a single word, a simple act of His will. And the reason is that as He alone has being from Himself, He alone can give being to others.

Now this precisely is what the Lord did in the beginning, as we proclaim in the words: *Creator of heaven and earth*. By these words we make profession of our belief that everything outside God has received its origin and beginning from Him. I say *everything*, because, though the Creed mentions heaven and earth alone, it comprises in these two creatures all other things, great and small, visible and

invisible. We confess and believe that away back in the past there was a time when nothing existed but God, and that in the moment that pleased Him all began to be, all sprang forth from nothing, without any other agency, without any other matter, than the sovereign command of His voice : *He spoke and they were made : He commanded and they were created* ; and hence the Prophet Baruch describes created things answering as if animated to the voice of God : *They were called, and they said : Here we are : and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them.*¹

True, indeed, our intelligence cannot comprehend how God could make the immense machine of the universe spring forth from nothing in the twinkling of an eye. But, in the first place, it is an article of faith clearly revealed in Sacred Scripture, which, in fact, begins precisely with the wondrous work of creation : *In the beginning God created heaven and earth* ; and the Psalmist, addressing God, says : *Thine are the heavens and Thine is the earth ; the world and the fulness thereof Thou hast founded* ; and St. Paul : *All things were created in Him and by Him* ; not to speak of many other passages. Our duty, then, in this respect is to believe, not understand.

Again, one of two things must necessarily be admitted—either the world was created by God or it has always existed—there is no other possible alternative. But difficult as it is to understand the creation of the world, is it not more difficult to suppose that the world has always been ? To understand the creation of all things, it suffices to believe that God is a Being of infinite, unlimited power, capable of doing much more than our minds can grasp. But to suppose a heaven, an earth, a world, such as we see them, without admitting God a Creator, is a thing altogether inconceivable. For how could this material world exist of itself and govern itself from all eternity ? If uncreated and independent of God, it would, consequently, be another God, distinct from Him whom we adore,—and we at once have a chain of endless contradictions ? It is, moreover, an ascertained fact that the world has passed through various stages, as the successive development and perfectioning of the arts and sciences clearly prove. Now this of itself suffices to exclude the eternity of matter put forward by atheists, who are ready to embrace any and every absurdity in their foolish endeavour to deny the existence of God. Hence it is in accord, not only with faith, but also with reason, to believe in a real beginning of the world, a real creation—going back from cause to cause, from generation to generation, we must of necessity come to that Supreme and only

¹ Baruch iii. 35.

Principle of whom Moses has written *In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*

But should we desire to know the order and the manner which it pleased God to follow in the work of creation, we find the answer in Divine Scripture, which alone can teach it to us.

First of all, God in an instant created heaven and earth, that is, all the material that was to serve for both the one and the other ; but this was only an immense chaos, a formless, imperfect, confused mass. Next, the Lord employed six days in ordering and distributing that matter, assigning to each thing its form and perfection, and producing the various species of creatures,—one might almost say like a painter, who first makes a drawing and rough outline of the whole figure he desires to paint, and then gradually paints and perfects. Thus, in its substance, the creation of the universe was the work of an instant ; in its ultimate perfection it was the work of six days or six periods of time.

Coming now to examine one by one the beings created by God in those six memorable days, we find that on the first day after having created heaven and earth, God called forth light to shine on the universe: *Let light be*, and with it He gave a soul to the whole universe, which without it was only a corpse, a sepulchre, an obscure and dark abyss. Yet this light was not the sun, which was created, as Scripture tells us, on the fourth day, together with the stars and planets ; but, like the sun, it had a regular movement, and by its appearance, increase, and disappearance it fixed the first measure of time and divided day from night.

The second day God made the firmament in the middle of the waters which enveloped the earth, that is to say, according to the common explanation, He created the centre region of the air, or that space between us and the heavens, and thus divided all the waters into two parts,—one part, reduced to vapour, being lifted above the firmament ; the other, more dense and heavy, descending on the earth. But notwithstanding this separation into inferior and superior waters, the earth remained still completely covered on all sides.

The third day the Lord conducted the waters into receptacles prepared for them, especially into the immense deep of the sea, to which He fixed inviolable boundaries, leaving free from water and dry that part of the earth which He had destined for human habitation. That dwelling-place, however, was still bare and arid, and without sign of herb or plant, but on the same day the Lord adorned it with its beautiful vesture of herbs and flowers and plants of every kind.

The fourth day God created the sun and moon, and planets, and the countless myriads of stars ; He assigned them their regular

and periodic movements, and assigned to them the function of giving light to the earth, and of distinguishing day and night and the different seasons of the year.

The fifth day He commanded the waters to produce fish and the air to produce birds ; and suddenly, at the sound of His voice, fish of every kind filled the waters, and myriads of birds spread their wings through the vast expanse of the air.

The sixth day He commanded the earth to bring forth various classes of animals and reptiles ; and in obedience to His word the earth became inhabited by every species of beast and insect.

But the masterpiece which God had reserved for this day, and by which He completed His work, was man, for whom He had formed all the rest. But as man was created with greater pomp and under very special circumstances, we shall devote a special instruction to the subject.

Thus was accomplished in time the great work of creation, precisely as God had conceived it from all eternity ; and who is there amongst us who in the presence of these wonders of the creative hand of God will not bow down before the treasures of His wisdom and His power ? Sometimes we wonder at the power of the monarchs of this earth, as, for instance, when we see them build cities, level mountains, open canals, run roads through the midst of rocks, raise mighty armies, dismantle fortresses and destroy whole provinces. And yet in the midst of all this pomp and display, how weak and feeble is their power ! God alone, by a simple act of His will, produced the universe ; by one miraculous *fiat* He spread above us the vault of the vast firmament ; and here below He consolidated the earth on its basis, raised up the mountains on its surface, hollowed out its valleys, opened out its plains, watered it with rivers, streams, and springs, and adorned it with marvellous fecundity. At the all-powerful sound of His voice all things acquired existence, life, fertility : *He spake and they were made ; He commanded and they were created.*

We must not pause to ask why it was that the Lord, having resolved to create the world, did not accomplish His design sooner, and why He deferred creation so long. The question would be at once bold and ridiculous. *Bold*, because we should not try to pry into the hidden designs of God ; *ridiculous*, because even if the world were millions of years older than it is the same question might still be asked. And what is any length of time, no matter how long, in comparison with the eternity of God which, in any event, precedes the creation of the world ? God, then, willed from all eternity to create the world ; but He created it exactly in the time that suited His own designs.

Rather let us enquire what was His purpose in creating it. Here, indeed, we have a proper subject for investigation, since God does nothing without a sublime end worthy of His infinite wisdom. Sacred Scripture gives the answer : *The Lord hath made all things for Himself.*¹

This, however, must be properly understood. It does not mean that God had any need of His creatures, or that they could procure Him any intrinsic advantage. Nothing can be added to the intrinsic glory and happiness of a God infinitely rich in every good, and essentially happy in Himself ; but there can be addition to His extrinsic glory and accidental satisfaction, which consists in seeing creatures respond to His love, accomplish His adorable will, serve the end and object for which they were created. It is this extrinsic glory which He has willed and proposed to Himself as the last essential end of all His works : *The Lord hath made all things for Himself.*

But of all the beings He has created, we alone, strictly speaking, can procure Him this glory. Doubtless, the inferior creatures to which He gave existence show forth and exalt by their beauty, their order, and their symmetry, the power and wisdom of God : *The heavens show forth the glory of the Lord* ; but they cannot really know their creator, nor pay a tribute of praise and thanks to the creative hand that has formed them. This is why the Lord also created spiritual and rational beings such as us—capable of knowing Him in His works of loving and glorifying Him, and, like the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace, of inviting all creatures to bless Him : *All ye works of the Lord bless the Lord.* On the other hand, the Lord willed to turn all the rest of creation to our good, and to furnish us thereby with every advantage and source of joy. Every creature in the world, from the greatest down to the very least—everything that is beautiful and good in nature—all was ordained by God for the service of man ; hence the first word that fell from the Creator's lips on the ears of newly-created man was the command : *Rule over them*, by which God constituted man monarch of all ; and it is to this that the Prophet alludes when he says : *Thou hast subjected all things under his feet.*

Thus, as all other things have been created directly for us, so we for God, in such a way that by means of us all returns to Him and sings His glory.

And now for an important conclusion that follows from all this : It is our strict duty to consecrate unreservedly to His glory, not only our persons, but all things around us, which He has placed at

¹ Prov. xvi. 4.

our service on the condition that we promote His glory. And as hideous disorder would be the result were the other creatures to refuse to serve us, the sun to show us light, fire to warm us, the earth to afford us food ; so would it be a grave violation of law and order for us to refuse God the homage we owe Him—worse still if instead of making use of creatures to raise ourselves up to Him, to honour and love Him, we were to use them as instruments to outrage Him, or abuse them to satisfy our evil passions

On their side all other creatures do not fail to correspond to the designs of God ; with perfect obedience and fidelity, invariably do they observe the laws which He has laid down for them. And even though submission in their case is the outcome of necessity and not of choice, should it not powerfully stimulate us to respect in like manner the sovereign Will that has created us ? We alone can render to God a true homage, that is to say, a free, reasonable, and voluntary homage,—shall we refuse to offer it ? Shall we alone be indocile, rebellious, opposed to God, while around us all the other creatures are respectful and submissive to His decrees ?

Shall we allow the very fact that God has endowed and ennobled us with the privilege of an intellect, a heart, and a free will, to become a motive for freeing ourselves from His dominion, for living independently of Him, and according to our own sweet will ? Ah, let us go no further ; let each of us within himself ponder on a monstrosity, the worst that can be conceived, and the darkness of which cannot but be evident to every eye.

Eighth Instruction on the Creed

ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

IN the last instruction I dwelt in a general way on the work of creation which is proposed for our belief by the words of the first article of the Creed: *Creator of heaven and earth.*

Before entering, however, on a detailed study of it in its two principal results, that is to say, angels and men, I must dwell for a few moments on an important point intimately connected with and inseparable from our belief in the Creation. It is this: After having created the world, did God abandon it to itself, taking care or thought of it no more? Does He let it run its course by chance and at hazard? To think so would be a monstrous error, the maddest folly. The same Omnipotent will that drew the world out of nothing, unceasingly presides over its destinies; and if God were to cease for as much as a single instant to preserve and guard it, all things would at once return to their original nothingness, because God, being the only cause of the existence of creatures, must necessarily be also the only cause of their continued duration.

The article we are now explaining makes no express mention of this, but it clearly implies it when it says that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, since the idea of Creator necessarily implies that of provident, permanent, perpetual Ruler. What a peculiar monarch would he be who would not govern his subjects, or take any interest in his kingdom, even though such a one is not their creator but merely their master! And shall not God take thought on His creatures, He who, by His immensity, is found in all places—He who, as First Necessary Being, is the support and stay of all other beings!

By both faith and reason, therefore, which direct us to believe in God the Creator, we are also obliged to believe that He is Supreme Ruler of Creation, that is, to acknowledge a divine Providence, the denial of which would be equivalent to the negation of God's wisdom, goodness, justice, sovereignty, and consequently of God Himself.

Yes, God's Providence exists. Carefully endeavour to grasp this truth which is the subject of this instruction: As all things spring from the hands of God, so over all things does His Providence extend.

It is His Providence that maintains, uniform and unvarying, the physical order of the world. Hence the regular and periodic movement of the planets, the unvarying succession of day and night, the regular change of seasons, the constant reproduction of men, animals, plants, and all living things. The tiniest objects do not escape Divine Providence, which, as Holy Scripture says, gives food to the birds of the air, and their white vesture to the lilies of the fields.

It is God's Providence that regulates and directs all the vicissitudes of the world,—not merely the great and glorious events that shake the world to its foundations, such as the rise and fall of kingdoms and dynasties, political changes and revolutions, the troubles and disasters that follow in the train of war, famine, and pestilence; but also those that daily pass unperceived, the most trivial occurrences, nay even the fall of a leaf, as is indicated in the Gospel when it tells us that not even a sparrow can fall to the earth without God's decree: *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father.*¹

Now if God thus watches over material beings and their fortunes, will He not also think on man, His noblest creature, for whom He created all other things and of whom in a special way He is God, Father, Sovereign? Bear this well in mind: If God has any special care and Providence it is for us; from Him we derive movement, respiration, life: *In Him*, says St. Paul, *we live and move and have our being*; it is He who watches over all the changes, all the vicissitudes, with which our lives are strewn—the slightest thing, the fall of a hair, does not escape Him: *A hair of your head shall not perish*;² from Him too come all salutary impulses to good and virtuous deeds; yet He never interferes with our liberty and free will; and therefore on the one side we have laws and precepts to be observed, and side by side with these we find rewards and punishments to be meted out to us according to our deserts.

Nay, more: our very sins, though neither willed nor ordained by Him, but merely permitted and tolerated by Him, come within the range of His Providence, which makes use of the malice of men to accomplish His designs, as it would be easy to prove by hundreds of examples.

Such, then, is that universal Providence which regulates all, presides over all, watches over all, and conducts all to His own ends in a way at once wonderfully mild and efficacious: *He reacheth therefore from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly.*³

¹ Matt. x. 29.² Luke xxi. 18.³ Wis. viii. 1.

Let no one object that it is a degradation, an abasement, of the Lord's majesty to make it stoop to so many minute details. Such a notion would be nothing short of impiety and folly, hardly excusable even in the mouth of the ignorant and unlearned ; and yet certain people who call themselves philosophers do not blush to give utterance to it. If God did not consider He was abasing Himself by giving existence to creatures, how can it be said that He abases Himself by governing them ? How can it be said that it is an excessive burthen on Him to govern them if He was able to create them without the slightest effort ? Are we to measure God by the small standard of man ? The sovereigns of the earth need many ministers, a multiplicity of offices, tribunals, laws, and decrees. But not so with God—He is found everywhere ; the earth is filled with Him ; and hence the care of the universe can give Him no trouble. He has no need even to multiply His acts—with one, simple eternal act He sees all, designs all, wills all, prepares all ; and the series of events that take place successively and gradually under our eyes, were all comprised in His eternal, original, all-embracing decree. Such, then, is the idea we must form of the Supreme Being.

And this idea should not only strengthen our faith in His Providence, but it should also justify it fully in our eyes. Let me explain : There are many who rashly lift their voice and criticize the conduct of God on the plea that human affairs do not turn out as well as they might. Fools ! they never pause to reflect that our vision is limited by a very narrow horizon, a very limited outlook, and that we regard only ourselves, only our own pleasure, only the present moment ; while God's vision in the government of the world embraces the whole universe, has no other end than His glory and our salvation, and not merely considers this life, but also, and much more so, the life to come. This single consideration should suffice to close for ever the mouths of blasphemers such as these.

To take an example : How many of God's creatures seem defective, imperfect, even harmful ? Admitted to the divine counsels, we should unhesitatingly have banished them from the world. But to form a judgment of the kind, do we know enough regarding all the relations which they bear to the general design of God ? When we see a complicated machine, constructed by a skilful tradesman, even though we do not yet know the use of the various parts and wheels of which it is composed, and even though some of them seem useless or harmful, we yet refrain from blaming the maker, because we know well that he is able to give a reason for all and can show that the various parts contribute to the object he had in view.

And yet we dare to criticize Providence in many things, even though we do not know the scope and extent of His designs.

Can you find anything on earth, no matter how injurious or harmful it may be from one point of view, that from another point of view does not offer some advantage, some profit? Poisons, tempests, floods, are sometimes of great utility. That which seems bad to us, is either not bad at all or contributes to a greater good. You can never form a correct judgment regarding a picture as long as you only see a corner of it or a small part of it.

Another thing that scandalizes many and leads to much foolish observation is the inequality of state and condition in this world,—as if it was not this very inequality that maintains harmony in the whole universe by reason of the reciprocal need each has of the other—the poor of the rich, the rich of the poor, the great of the little, the little of the great. If, as St. Paul reasons, there were no diversity in the members and operations of the body, how could it subsist? *If the whole body were the eye where would be the hearing . . . where the smelling?*¹

Still, you may ask, how justify this frightful inequality in riches and fortune—some rolling in wealth and abounding in all good things, while others languish in misery and absolute want? But here we are brought face to face with another order of things. God, who is the sovereign Lord and giver of all good gifts, has made it the bounden duty of the rich to take care of the poor; towards the rich He has been bountiful, but He has also made them His almoners; and if they afford the poor a solid reason for blaspheming His Providence they shall infallibly be lost. God wills that they accomplish their salvation principally through the exercise of charity. But even though charity is wanting in the rich, God does not wish the poor to fail in that patience which He has established as their way of salvation. Hence, even should a poor man be reduced to death by starvation, it is not of God that he should complain. For He who is the absolute master of life has not excluded this kind of death any more than other kinds; and it matters but little to a Christian whether he dies of hunger rather than by fire or sword or illness—provided he dies in the Lord every kind of death will be a source of advantage to him and of glory to God.

But that which makes a still deeper impression is the sight of the good suffering and the wicked prospering in this life—a spectacle that seems to you to be in contradiction with divine justice. Here again you are wrong. That the God of Justice will render to each one

¹Cor. xii. 17.

according to his works, no one doubts,—but how can we prove that He should do it in this life? God permits these examples of virtue suffering and vice triumphant so as to let us see that all does not end here below, but that there is another life, in which each one shall receive a recompense corresponding to his deserts.

Once you have faith in the life to come, nothing is more reasonable than the plan of Divine Providence in the distribution of joys and sorrows here below. For there is no man so wicked as not to have some good in him; and there is none so good as not to possess some defect. Now God leaves no good, be it ever so small, without its reward; and in the same way He leaves no evil, be it ever so small, without its punishment. As a rule, He rewards the bad in this life for that little good which they do, while He waits to punish them hereafter for their crimes. He punishes the good by temporal punishments for their smaller faults, while he waits to reward them eternally for their virtues. Now where is the absurdity or injustice of this system? Is it not even perfectly just and proper? The present time is not the harvest, says Jesus Christ. And hence God permits the good and the wicked to live on together, undistinguished here below; He permits the many scandals, the many crimes, the many iniquities which He often leaves unpunished; He permits the oppression of the good and the triumph of the wicked. But all these things, which inspire us with false ideas of God and of His Providence, are thoroughly explained by faith in another life.

Our mistake, then, lies in this, that we consider only the fleeting days of our pilgrimage; and hence we would that God should explain everything at once, and should manifest Himself by the marks of His divine justice; while all the time He but awaits His own good hour, which is unending eternity.

For the sake of brevity I pass over many other observations that might be made on the supposed happiness of the wicked and unhappiness of the good, which in truth are by no means general, are more apparent than real, and are altogether exaggerated; and I observe that even though we could offer no explanation of all this, it would not be a sufficient reason for us to deny God's Providence, or call it into doubt. "I do not understand such and such a thing," you say; "therefore God is not just." What feeble reasoning! Let us invert the proposition, and say: "God is essentially provident and just, therefore such and such a thing is just, even though we do not understand it." There is nothing more logical. The sole idea of that all-perfect Being which God is, and which we cannot deny without denying His existence, should prove to us the holiness and justice of His actions, even in things which our weak intelligence cannot fathom

There are many circumstances in which His Providence is displayed in so striking a way that we are obliged to form a favourable opinion even of those things we do not understand, and to exclaim with St. John : *Great and wonderful are Thy works, O Lord God Almighty ; just and true are Thy ways, O King of Ages.*

In a word, not all the ways of Divine Providence can be revealed to us in the present life. Many times we see His work from the wrong side, just as if we looked at the back of a piece of tapestry. From this false point of view we can understand nothing, because we see only a confusion of points, lines, and circles crossing and re-crossing, without order or design. In the same way we are uncertain and astonished about many things, because the designs of God and the hidden ways of His Providence are not sufficiently clear to us. But the day will come when God shall bring forth into light of day the paths He has followed in the government of the world ; and then each one will be constrained to admit that He has ever acted as an infinitely wise and infinitely just God : *Thou hast done all things in wisdom—just are Thy ways.*

The fruit we should draw from this instruction is already clear. Our faith in the Providence of God should, in the first place, make us, in every circumstance of our lives, adore His holy designs, which are always dictated by His infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness, however much they are hidden from us ; and, in the second place, should drive far from our lips and heart every complaint, lamentation, imprecation, and blasphemy. But this is not all. Our faith should further inspire us with a holy confidence in God, a complete and perfect resignation to His decrees, and a filial trust in Him, in all our needs, dangers, and misfortunes. Assured on the one hand that God loves us, and on the other that nothing can happen without His permission and express will, let us have courage and cast aside all fear.

One thing only is to be feared, and that is sin. It is the only fear we should have. If we remain faithful to God, He will permit nothing to injure us—nay, He will turn all things to our greater advantage : *To them that love God all things work together unto good.* Of this truth Sacred Scripture furnishes us with abundant examples—the history of an Abraham, a Joseph, a Moses, a Daniel, a Job, a Tobias, and many other holy personages. These are so many proofs that if Divine Providence tries us at times, it also supports us : if it afflicts us, it also consoles us ; if it exposes us to combat, it also crowns us when the victory is won : *To them that love God all things work together unto good.* Ever praised, blessed, and glorified be Divine Providence ; but at the same time, may His holy will be always faithfully accomplished by us !

Ninth Instruction on the Creed

CREATION OF THE ANGELS

AMONG the different works of the hands of God two deserve special attention—the angels, the noblest creatures of heaven; and man, the noblest creature on earth. Let us begin with the former; their story cannot be a matter of indifference to us, both because of the precious lessons it contains, and because of the consequences that are derived therefrom and are applicable to our present state.

That there are pure spirits called angels is an incontestable article of Faith, there being innumerable passages of Holy Scripture in which mention is made of them, of their ministry, their functions, and their apparitions on earth. It is also an article of Faith that they were created by God, like visible and material beings. This is what we profess in the words of the Creed: *Creator of heaven and earth*—that is to say, we profess our belief that God has drawn every being, both material and spiritual, out of nothing; a truth still more explicitly declared in the Nicene Creed, where, to the words already quoted, we find the addition: “and of all things visible and invisible”—the angels being designated by the expression “invisible things.”

When they were created, that is, in what instant, on what day of the creation of the world, we do not precisely know. Though Moses often makes mention of them in his books, yet in the description which he has left us of the works accomplished by God in the first six days they are not expressly named. Hence the precise time at which they were created is uncertain. Some refer it to that first instant in which God created the heaven and the earth, on the ground that they are sufficiently indicated by the word *heaven*, inasmuch as they are its ornament and perfection; others refer it to the first day when light was made, understanding by the word *light* not only the light we see, but also the light of the angels. However this may be, we must hold that in the beginning the angels were created by God along with all things visible and material.

Moreover, God created a countless host of angels, as we can see from Sacred Scripture, which divides them into orders and hierarchies. He created them to assist before His throne and to form His court; to serve as His messengers to earth and as executors of His will; and lastly to associate them with Himself, as His

ministers, in the government of this world. Accordingly He adorned them with many prerogatives of nature and of grace. As regards natural gifts, He made them pure spirits without a body, so that in this respect they are perfectly like unto God Himself, who is a pure spirit free from all matter. And if they have sometimes appeared on earth clothed with a body, as did the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin, and Raphael to Tobias, the body was not theirs but had been borrowed to render them in some sort visible. He has also made them impassible and immortal, beyond the reach of suffering, corruption, or death, and so endowed with life that no natural force can take it away. He made them intelligent, that is to say, He gave them eminent knowledge, a brilliant understanding, a capacity to grasp the most profound truths, and lastly a power superior to that of all other creatures.

As regards the gifts of grace, the angels were created in a state of justice, of innocence, and of holiness, enriched with the supernatural habits of Faith, Hope and Charity, and destined to the wonderful end of possessing God eternally.

Such was their original condition. Yet this state, highly favoured and privileged as God had made it, was not fixed, permanent and immutable, as is that of the blessed in heaven, who can neither sin nor lose grace. No, they could sin, they could lose grace, just as we can do, as long as we are on this earth. And though we say they were created in heaven, we do not mean precisely that heaven in which the blessed contemplate God, but simply a region superior to ours, in which they enjoyed a natural felicity corresponding to their dignity, as was proportionately that of Adam in the terrestrial paradise ; but they did not yet enjoy that supernatural happiness which consists in the possession and clear vision of God, for if they did they could neither sin nor be lost.

In a word, they were probationers or travellers like ourselves, put to the test for a period assigned by God, during which they could do good or evil, use or abuse the liberty, the grace, the gifts, they had received from Him, and thus render themselves worthy or unworthy of that supreme happiness which was their last end.

But this time of probation was very brief—so brief that it was over before the disobedience of our first parents. Lucifer, the first and noblest of the angels, rebelled against God and drew after him in his rebellion a great number of partisans. Sacred Scriptures tell us that their sin was one of pride : *Pride is the beginning of all sin.*¹ What the particular object of their pride was, we are unable to determine with

¹ Ecclus. x. 15.

certainty. Some have thought that the angels, vain of their prerogatives, claimed to be equal to God; others that they ambitioned a sovereign dominion over the inferior creatures, independently of God; while others ascribe it to a refusal on their part to obey some command that was imposed on them by God. The general opinion on the matter comes to this, that God having revealed to them the future Incarnation of the Divine Word, these angels, hearing that the Son of God was to unite Himself hypostatically to a human nature so inferior to their own, and that consequently they should be obliged to render homage to this nature subsisting in the Divine nature, were carried away by such an excess of rage and jealousy that they refused to render Him submission, obedience, and adoration.

But these opinions are only more or less probable conjectures. What is certain is, that the angels sinned by pride, the outcome of either presumption or of arrogance or of unwillingness to submit and obey—a pride all the more culpable in their case, inasmuch as they had greater light to combat it and resist its attacks. Hence punishment was immediately meted out for the fault; without leaving them any time to repent, God at once cast them out of heaven, condemned them to the abyss of hell, changed them from noble spirits into as many demons. Terrible, memorable example of justice, left us by God from the beginning of the world, to show us how He detests pride, how great is the heinousness of a single mortal sin, even in thought, and how we ought to distrust ourselves and our powers! And who is there who has not reason to fear, seeing that God has refused to pardon creatures so excellent, the most beautiful work that ever left His hands? For if God, says St. Peter, *spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments*,¹ what can we expect whose condition is so far beneath that of the angels?

And as the first act of rebellion sufficed to plunge those unhappy spirits into the abyss of misery, without any hope of mercy, so the first proofs of fidelity sufficed to confirm the other angels in grace, and to lead them to the happy end that awaited them. All did not rebel against God; many—the greater number doubtless—remained faithful to God, submissive, humble, and mindful of His gifts. At their head was the glorious St. Michael, who, with his followers, burning with zeal for the honour of the Lord, withstood Lucifer and his hosts, as is described in the Apocalypse; and hence he was appointed chief of the heavenly host, and, with his faithful companions, was admitted at once, in return for their loyalty, to the possession of God.

¹ 2 Peter ii. 4.

Thus that almost infinite host of angels, created by God to be all eternally happy with Him, was divided into two bands, separated by an unfathomable abyss—one, composed of the good angels, being raised to glory; the other, that of the wicked angels, condemned for ever to hell; these are called demons, devils, evil spirits, angels of darkness, while their prince and chief bears the name of Satan.

But all these spirits, as I remarked in the beginning, had been created by the Lord to serve as His ambassadors and messengers on earth, as the very name of angel implies. And hence it is that even after their separation they do not cease to concern themselves with us; but their employment differs very much according to their respective conditions. Let us, then, consider what is the occupation of each class with regard to us.

The unceasing occupation of the rebel angels is to make war on God, to tempt men, to incite and allure them to evil, so as to make them the companions of their punishment after having made them imitators of their infidelity. What excites and spurs them on to this perverse and truly diabolic endeavour, is their rage against God, who has cast them out of heaven, as well as their devouring jealousy towards those destined by God to occupy the place forfeited by them in their revolt. Hence it is impossible to express the untiring diligence with which they labour; how they employ all the subtlety of their angelic intellect to entice men away from the adoration, worship, and knowledge of God, so as to make them their partisans and to involve them in their own ruin and perdition. To give us some idea of this, Sacred Scripture depicts them as cunning serpents hidden in the grass, waiting to strike us unexpectedly and kill us with their venomous poison; or as hungry lions, incessantly prowling round about, seeking whom they may devour: *Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.* To them must be traced the origin of the ruin of the human race by the sin of our first parents; to them, also, the cause of the death of their descendants.

And do tempting demons really exist? Yes, they exist; it is no delusion, but an incontestable truth clearly attested by Sacred Scripture; and hence it is an error to say, as many do, that the tempter is none other than our own evil inclinations. For in addition to this domestic enemy which we carry within us, and in addition to the world without us, we must recognize another enemy, distinct from each of these, but making use of them to accomplish our destruction, that is, the devil. Was not Jesus Christ Himself, for our instruction, tempted in the desert by the demon in human form, because, having for our sake taken on Himself the whole exterior of sin in everything except sin itself, He wished to subject Himself to all the trials and

all the infirmities to which we are exposed? Are we not asked in Baptism formally to renounce the devil and his suggestions: "Dost thou renounce Satan?" And does not Sacred Scripture frequently tell us of his artifices and snares, and of the precautions with which we should surround ourselves? No, it is impossible to doubt of this truth without at the same time doubting of the Sacred Scriptures, which are always infallible in everything that they propose to us regarding faith and morals.

But how, you may ask, is it possible for the demons to tempt us, if it be true that they are condemned to the eternal pains of hell?

The answer is, that though they actually suffer eternal torments, this does not prevent many of them from infesting the earth and roaming about on all sides, seeking in a thousand ways to injure or ruin us; and hence it is that St. Paul calls them: *The spirits of wickedness in high places*. There is, it is true, a certain class of people, posing as unprejudiced, who deride these truths as superstitions and fables fit only for old women. But with all due respect to these, their mockery and sarcasm are of little weight in face of the Gospel narrative, which tells us much of the obsessed and the demoniac, and of the power which Jesus Christ gave to His disciples to banish evil spirits from the bodies of the possessed. In the same way their sneers are of little weight in the face of the practice of the Church, which is assuredly more enlightened than they, and which has composed and uses blessings, prayers, and exorcisms to preserve or liberate persons, habitations, the fruits of the earth and the like, from the attacks of the evil one.

In these considerations we have many proofs of the baneful influence of the demons over man. It is no mere excessive simplicity or credulity to believe in such things; it would rather be a want of faith to think differently. Doubtless one should not lightly accept all that is said of the doings of the devil: but are we on that account to refuse all belief in the matter, and to reject all as stories and fables? It is one thing to assent too readily to all that one hears, but quite another obstinately to reject or deny all—both extremes are equally to be avoided.

Finally, you will ask, why does God permit the demons to come and tempt us by their snares? Could He not hinder them? Certainly He could, and up to a certain extent He does. Woe to us if they could freely vent their hatred and malice against us! But God restrains and checks them, so that they cannot pass certain bounds, as is proved by the history of holy Job.

But He does not hinder them altogether—He even permits them to assail and tempt us. And why? To oblige us to be always on our guard, always attached to Him, as well as to leave us the merit of com-

bating and the glory of conquering with the help of His grace,—in a word, for our own advantage. To keep up our courage, then, it suffices for us to know that the demons can do nothing without the express permission of God, and that in whatever He allows them to do He furnishes us with strength sufficient to triumph, if we but avail of His assistance. Of this St. Paul assures us in the consoling words : *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able : but will make also with temptation issue.*¹ Look on the devil, the Fathers advise, as a dog that is chained up,—for though he may bark and snarl with rage, he cannot bite us, unless we put ourselves within his reach.

In conclusion, then, do not fear spectres or phantoms, but fear the enemies of your soul and of your salvation, and arm yourself against them with the weapons suggested by the Gospel, that is, vigilance, prayer, and fasting. By means of these we shall be always armed and ready to resist their assaults during life ; and we can merit for ourselves the grace of conquering them in that crucial combat which has to be waged at the hour of death, when, as Jesus Christ has told us, the devil will assail us with increased fury, knowing that but a short time remains to him to conquer us and secure possession of our souls. Finally, let us bear in mind that for our defence and assistance Divine Providence has given us the good angels, who are at least strong and helpful as the bad angels are injurious and pernicious. The good offices we are to expect from them, and the loving, ceaseless, indefatigable care they devote to us, shall be the subject of our next instruction, which will form the necessary complement of this

¹ 1 Cor. x. 13.

Tenth Instruction on the Creed

OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS

GOD has permitted that the fallen angels, banished from heaven and changed into demons, should become our implacable enemies, ever tempting us to evil, ever planning the ruin of our souls ; but at the same time, in His Providence, he ordained to give us as a help in our struggle against them the assistance of the good angels, who, having triumphed over their false brethren in heaven, continue to triumph over them here on earth, by fighting for us and with us. "For our protection," says St. Chrysostom, "He established the angelic host." Having spoken of the bad angels in our last instruction, I now proceed to speak of the occupation of the good angels ; and this will afford me an opportunity of recommending a devotion which is generally but little cultivated, yet which should be dear and familiar to every Christian, and should hold a prominent place in our practices of piety. Though the good angels have not all the same power and dignity, since God has distributed them into several orders subordinate to each other, nevertheless, as St. Paul tells us, they are all *ministering spirits sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation*. Thus some have been deputed by Him to protect nations and provinces, others to guard cities, others to watch over churches, altars, houses and families, as is clear from various passages of Sacred Scripture.

But those most intimately connected with us are our guardian angels, thus called because specially deputed by God for our defence, guardianship, and protection. That each one of us has been confided to the guardianship of an angel is a truth which it is not lawful for us to doubt, since it is clearly laid down in several passages of Sacred Scripture, and is universally taught by the Fathers, who have taken it as a text to prove the immensity of God's love for us, the value of our souls, the importance of our eternal salvation, and the respect due to every human being, no matter how vile and abject : *For He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways*.¹ Not content with that general Providence which watches

¹Ps. xc. 11.

incessantly over us, God has also entrusted us to the custody of the angels, directing them to accompany us and watch over us. Hardly were we conceived in our mother's womb when He assigned us this heavenly guide to take up his place at our side, never to forsake us during the whole course of our life.

Now, in what does this guardianship consist? Beyond all doubt, in rendering us all the good and loving offices that are to be expected of a heavenly teacher and guardian—enlightening us, advising us, helping us, consoling us, and, as far as depends on him, leading us to the haven of salvation. Our own guardian angels invisibly do for us all that Holy Scripture tells us was visibly done by the angels in favour of Lot, Agar, Jacob, Judith, Daniel, Tobias, and many others. And although certain choice favours, certain signal graces, are the fruit of faithful correspondence with their inspirations, and of the gratitude we entertain towards them, it is none the less true that they do not fail to assist even the most negligent and ungrateful. It is enough for them that they have received a command from God, whose faithful ministers they are; that they truly love our souls, whose worth and excellence they thoroughly appreciate; that they desire to refill the seats left vacant in heaven by the rebellious angels. For these reasons they never cease to protect us, no matter how unworthy we may show ourselves to be.

To enter a little more into particulars, the blessings bestowed on us by the angels may be divided into two classes, *corporal* and *spiritual*.

(a) *Corporal blessings*, defending us from a thousand dangers to which we are daily exposed. Who can ever count them? Dangers in childhood, in youth, in old age and decrepitude; dangers by water, by fire, by falls, by precipices; dangers in travel, in strife, in sickness, in untoward events, in a thousand unforeseen accidents. Is there a single one of us who can say that in the course of his life he has not often found himself exposed to peril and danger? Now, who has freed and continues to free us from such dangers, against which not all our vigilance suffices to safeguard us, if not our angel guardian, who has carried us and still carries us, as the Psalmist says, in the palm of his hand?—*In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

Not only does he watch over our life but also over our honour, our possessions, and the success of our undertakings. Of this we have a living and palpable proof in the history of Tobias. We are accustomed to attribute our good fortune and the success of our projects to our own talent and industry, or even to chance; but why should we not rather attribute it all to the beneficent hands of our good angel?

Judging merely by appearances, Tobias might have easily believed that all was accidental and human in that series of happy events which signalized his journey into Media—his deliverance from the jaws of a monster fish, which threatened to devour him and which afterwards served to restore his father's sight ; his prompt recovery of the money lent to Gabelus ; the marriage contracted with Sara, which freed his family from the straits of poverty ; the expulsion of the demon of death from the house of Raguel, and the like. But when the Archangel Raphael, who had accompanied him in the form of a beautiful youth, under the name of Azarias, disclosed his real identity, then Tobias clearly understood that to him he was indebted for all his success : *We are filled with all good things through him*—a confession that we also would repeat if we had faith in the beneficent influence our guardian angel exercises over the events of our life.

But as the angels have been assigned for our protection principally as a help to save our souls, so to this task do they direct their liveliest solicitude. Nor can we indeed believe that they are less diligent in endeavouring to save us, than the devils are in effecting our damnation. And hence what loving devices they adopt to draw us from evil and allure us to good ; hence the thousand gentle voices that whisper to the heart, breathing words of remorse or urging us to virtue ; the timely lights and holy inspirations giving light and strength to mind and heart ; and the thousand favourable circumstances and events they bring about, so as to effect their purpose ! Of ourselves we can do nothing in the order of salvation without the divine assistance ; but this, according to St. Thomas, is given to us through the hands of the angels who solicit all such favours from God and distribute them immediately to us. They defend us against the temptations of the demon, sometimes by warding off his attacks and driving away those evil spirits, in virtue of the power they have over them, as was shown by the expulsion of the demon of death from the house of Raguel by the Archangel Raphael ; and sometimes by pouring into our souls living light to let us see the ruses and artifices of the demons, and into our hearts strength and vigour to overcome them. Would to God that we would but do our part by faithfully co-operating with their efforts ! The fault is ours alone if temptation prevails and makes us succumb.

(b) *Spiritual blessings*.—Our angel guardians also protect us against the unforeseen dangers, to which we might be exposed, of losing the life of the soul by sin. Observe, I refer to *unforeseen* dangers, for there are certain dangers from which they do not deliver us, (God Himself having forbidden them to do so), and they are those dangers that are willed by us, and to which we rashly expose ourselves. In regard

to these it is useless to trust to the protection of our guardian angel, just as we cannot even expect it of God: *He who loves the danger shall perish in it.* And what I say of the dangers of the soul, applies also to those of the body, to which we must not imprudently expose ourselves. But even if we should happen to fall into sin by preferring to obey the demon of our passions rather than the inspirations of our guardian angel, he does not on that account retire in disgust, nor abandon us to ourselves and to our evil ways; but he lovingly exerts himself in our favour, offering fervent prayers to God to obtain time for repentance and the grace of conversion and amendment. Hence it is that the Fathers of the Church find a figure of our angel guardian in the vine-tender of the Gospel parable, who, on hearing the stern command of the owner to cut down the fig-tree because barren and unfruitful: *Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground?*¹ interceded and entreated so earnestly that he obtained a trial of another year to cultivate it and render it fruitful. Not otherwise does our angel guardian many times postpone by his prayers the thunderbolts of the divine anger ready to be hurled against us; and meanwhile labours in a thousand ways to lead us back to God, to awaken us and arouse us out of the slumber of our sins.

Nor need this cause astonishment; for the angels are our continual intercessors with God by virtue of the mission He has entrusted to them, and are always in continual activity on our behalf,—now flying to heaven to offer to God our prayers and good works; now descending, laden with new rewards and new gifts, in recompense of our fidelity,—a tender, loving exercise which is well depicted in the mystic ladder seen by Jacob, reaching from earth to heaven, and by which the angels continually ascended and descended.

It would be easy to go still further into the enumeration of the good offices they lavish on us; it would be easy to speak especially of that heavenly strength and consolation which we may expect from them in the various trials of this life. Of this strength and consolation we have clearest proofs in the lives of the saints. Nay, their efforts do not cease with the present life; but they supplicate in various ways the release of the faithful departed from the pains of Purgatory.

To resume all in a word: signal are the favours which we receive through the invisible ministry of our guardian angels,—favours of every kind, corporal and spiritual; favours at all times, at every hour, in every place, and in all circumstances. It is only in the light of the other life that we shall see distinctly the wonderful services

¹ Luke xiii. 7.

accorded us ; but even though not visible and manifest in this life, they are none the less real and certain, as our faith attests. How dear to us, then, ought to be this faithful friend and companion, who takes such an interest in us and in our welfare ! And yet, in all truth, there is no protector who is more forgotten than he to whom we owe the deepest gratitude. Each one has some special devotion, one to one saint, another to another. It is assuredly an excellent practice to make friends for ourselves in heaven ; but at the same time we must condemn the forgetfulness in which we leave the kindest and best friend of all, he who in a special manner watches over our safety, he whose office and mission it is to aid and assist us. Bear in mind, then, the duties which you owe your guardian angel, and which are summed up by St. Bernard in these three words : “ *Respect* for his presence, *gratitude* for his loving kindness, *confidence* in his protection.”

(a) And first, we owe him respect ; for he is always at our side. This respect calls for corresponding modesty and circumspection at every moment of our lives, leading us to avoid all that is unbecoming or unworthy of him. If the presence of an important personage, even though he be vile and contemptible in himself, is sufficient to steady us and keep us to our duty, should we not at the very least have an equal regard for a prince of the heavenly court, for a spirit of such eminent dignity and holiness ? How can we dare to do under his pure eyes that which we should not dare to do in the presence of the lowest and most wretched of men ? You will doubtless say that you do not think on your guardian angel ; but it is this precisely that aggravates your fault—to have him ever at your side, and never to think him worth a thought and to live wholly unmindful of him ! Have the thought of him frequently in mind, then ; let it become familiar to you ; and it will serve as a restraint against transgression, it will render you pure and circumspect in your actions, and all this will redound not so much to his honour as to your own great advantage.

(b) In the second place, we owe him a tender love of gratitude for the affection he entertains towards us. If it be true, as indeed cannot be doubted, that services demand gratitude, should not the untiring, constant, affectionate assistance which our guardian angel renders us, oblige us strictly to show him a return of the liveliest and most sensible feelings of gratitude ? And we can accomplish this duty if we think on him frequently, thank him often for the benefits he procures us, honour him every day by some act of devotion, and, above all, promptly obey his suggestions and inspirations, and, in a word, do everything that can give him pleasure.

(c) Finally, we owe him great confidence in return for the protection with which he unceasingly surrounds us and on which we can ever rely. If we had in the world a friend who was deeply attached to us, and who had, moreover, unlimited power and credit, what confidence should we not have in him? Now, our angel guardian is precisely such a friend; he is a protector who never fails in power or will or readiness to help us in all our needs. We should, then, esteem him as he deserves, confidently have recourse to him in dangers, doubts, and business concerns, in adversity, and above all in the various temptations by which we may be assailed. The livelier our trust in him, the more warm and efficacious will be the protection with which he surrounds us.

This, then, is a devotion earnestly to be recommended. After God, after Jesus Christ and His most holy Mother, our greatest honour should be given to our angel guardian. If we hope for his assistance in our last hour,—in that dread moment when we are to enter on an immutable eternity, and when the demon will multiply his most redoubtable assaults to effect our ruin, and when we shall stand most in need of assistance,—let us begin now to render him propitious and to secure his favour. It is quite certain that if during life his tender solicitude is extended over us in spite of our unworthiness, it will surely not fail us in the hour of death. But it is also certain that in accordance with God's decree this solicitude will always be in proportion to the obedience and submission we shall have shown our angel guardian. If we are wise, then, among the various preparations necessary for the great and final moment which is to decide our eternal lot, we shall not forget to make sure of his protection, and he will not fail to assist us in our needs, support us in the great struggle, and conduct us, not to the death of the reprobate, as Satan would wish, but to the happy passing away of the predestined. Oh! what a joy it will be for him to present before the throne of God the soul he has saved, as a dear and precious fruit of his tender vigilance; while, for us, what gratitude and love shall we not feel towards him to whom we shall in great part be indebted for our unending felicity!

Eleventh Instruction on the Creed

THE CREATION OF MAN

HAVING spoken of the angels, who are the noblest creatures of heaven, we shall now turn our attention to the creation of man, who is the noblest creature of earth—a subject of the deepest importance, inasmuch as it concerns our knowledge of ourselves. We shall therefore consider the first origin of man ; the state of felicity in which he was created ; his fall, which was also ours ; and finally the consequences of that fall—considerations which will serve as a key to open up many truths, amongst which the greatest assuredly is the necessity of that Redeemer spoken of in the subsequent articles.

When the Lord had created all other things He came to the creation of him for whose sake He had created all the rest, that is to say, man ; and in man He was pleased to combine and epitomise in an admirable manner the different properties of the other creatures. All those whom He had hitherto formed were either spiritual and invisible, as the Angels, or corporeal and visible, as heaven, earth, plants, and so forth. But now He united two widely different substances in an inexplicable but sensible and real bond, forming therefrom a third wonderful compound, which is man, a creature at once spiritual and corporeal,—spiritual, because possessing a soul which is a pure spirit, endowed with intelligence and will, capable of knowing good and evil, and free to choose one or the other ; corporeal because having a body like all other material things. Thus, by giving him a soul, God has made man superior to all earthly things ; and by assigning to this soul the prison of the body, God has made man a little lower than the angels.

But let us examine the manner in which God wrought this great work ; and let us hear Sacred Scripture on the point : *Let Us*, said the Lord, *make man to Our image and likeness* ; and having said these words He took a little earth and formed the human body therefrom ; *then He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul*. Thus was Adam, the first man, introduced into the world.

But God willed that Adam should be the head and father of all mankind, and that he should people the earth with inhabitants—and hence He shortly after destined a companion, a spouse for him, and this

is how He gave proceeded : He cast Adam into a sweet and profound sleep, during which He took, without any violence, one of the sleeper's ribs, and from it formed a new body, to which he added a rational soul. Thus was Eve created, the first mother of all the living.

Such is the divine account of our origin, and in it we find two things standing out in bold relief—the great goodness of God to man, and the high dignity of man himself.

Let us first of all pause to remark the mysterious words *let Us make*, which God pronounced when about to create man, and which He pronounced on this occasion alone. In creating all other things He spoke only in the singular : *Fiat* ; but when He comes to create man, He speaks in the plural : *Let Us make* ; and why ? To show, as St. Ambrose observes, that “ He created man with a certain special care ”—to show that He applies Himself in a special way to the creation of man, and that the Three divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity took part in the work. Judging according to our ideas one would almost say that they consult together and deliberate on the manner of creating him—that the Father wills to contribute His power, the Son His wisdom, and the Holy Ghost His goodness. *According to our ideas* ; because in God there could in reality be no doubt or hesitation between yes and no, nor could there be any divergence of opinion amongst the Three Persons ; He merely wished to show us the special attention which He paid to man, since He represents his creation as a work of much reflection and of special consideration.

A second reflection to be made is this : The many other beautiful and noble things that people the world were not produced immediately by God, but by earth, such as herbs, plants, trees, animals ; or by water, as fish and the like. But when it comes to creating man, it is God Himself who wills to form him with His own divine hand, not only as regards his soul which He was to create from nothing, and which could have no other direct Author than He, but also as regards his body, in the formation of which He Himself willed to be the Artificer and Maker, even though other creatures could have taken part in this work at a simple sign from their Creator. True, indeed, He formed man from the slime of the earth to teach us humility at the sight of the lowliness of our origin ; but the clay of our body has been fashioned and moulded by His divine hand : *Thy hands have made me and formed me* ; and truly nothing could be more marvellous than to see God, all intent and occupied in mind and act on that piece of clay—moulding the body and fashioning its parts and bending over it and breathing into that lifeless mass a soul which is, as it were, a chip of His own substance : *He breathed into man's face the breath of life*. Although these expressions must not be understood materially,

as if, while creating and animating man, God took on Himself a human shape ; yet they show the fatherly goodness of God towards man, and, in man, one of God's works specially designed and lovingly carried out.

Hence, though the material of man's body was base and lowly, the workmanship was truly admirable and divine. The very physical structure of the human frame—so well organized in its members, so harmoniously arranged in all its parts—goes to prove the existence of God,—so wonderful is this work, which surpasses all the wisdom and power of man.

Finally, God created man to His own image and likeness : *Let Us make man to Our image and likeness*, as much as to say : In the works already accomplished there is only a faint ray of Our Divine perfections ; let Us make man, in whom all these perfections will shine forth and who will be a living likeness of Us. Now in what does this likeness consist ? in the soul or in the body ? It is not in the body, even though the body has been fashioned by a Divine Artificer in a masterly manner ; but in the soul, which really does resemble God in its supernatural being, which, as we shall see, is derived from sanctifying grace, as well as in its natural being and its natural perfections.

The properties which make man's soul resemble its Creator are chiefly six :—

(1) It is, like God, a pure spirit, invisible to the eyes of the body and indivisible wherever it is ; for it presides whole and entire in the whole body and in each of its parts, just as God presides whole and entire in all the world and in each of its parts.

(2) Like God, it is immortal, and, though it dwells in the body, it is independent of it and survives it for all eternity.

(3) Though *one*, it is endowed with three glorious faculties—memory, intellect, and will, just as God, though one in essence, is three in person.

(4) Like God it has a free will, which is absolutely master of willing or not willing, just as it pleases ; so that it is not possible to force it against its own inclination.

(5) It is capable of virtue, of wisdom, of grace, and hence of eternal bliss and glory ; and can be fully content in none but God, just as God can be fully content in none but Himself.

(6) It surpasses in dignity and power corporeal and visible things, which are all inferior to it and employed in its service—thus resembling the supreme dominion of God over all things.

As a result of all these intrinsic properties of the human soul, it follows that man is made to the image and likeness of God ;

for though we are not in the same degree of perfection, being in this respect infinitely below Him, we are at all events in the same degree of nature, and under this aspect perfectly like unto Him. How much, then, do we not owe to this Divine Creator, who from the first creation of our race has enriched us with so many gifts, and ennobled us with so many privileges ?

As the first man was created by the hand of God, so have we ourselves been formed in our mother's womb. As regards the soul, which is the principal part of us, it is directly infused by God, and our parents had nothing to do with its creation. But as regards the body, it is indeed true that our parents co-operated in its formation ; but if we reflect on its wonderful structure we cannot but admit that it is also the work of the invisible hand of God : *Thy hands have made me and formed me*. Our parents did indeed help in its formation, but so blindly that at the birth of each one of us they could well repeat what the courageous mother of the Machabees said to her sons : *I know not how you were formed in my womb*¹—, as much as to say, it was not I who infused into you the soul that animates you ; nor was it I who fashioned the members of your body ; all this was the work of God, the Creator of the world, and the Author of life in man.

Let us too acknowledge that we hold our being from God, and let us thank Him with all our heart for the great favour done us in bringing us forth from the abyss of nothing—a favour which is the foundation of all the other blessings we have received or hope to receive ; and, what is more, a favour conferred on us in preference to so many others whom God has left in nothingness, and who, perhaps, would have corresponded better than we with His designs and wishes.

Yes, in the infinite series of possible creatures which presented themselves to His divine and all-fruitful mind, God fixed His eyes on us, preferred us to countless others, found pleasure in us, and has chosen us. And why ? Not for any merit of ours, since we did not then exist ; but purely and solely as an effect of His sovereign goodness which induced Him to love us from all eternity and to bring us forth from nothingness, in His own good time : *I have loved you with an unending love*. Let us, then, recognize the extent of the obligations we owe Him for this gratuitous and loving choice, by which He has called us into life,—obligations which are redoubled every moment of the day, since there is not a moment in which He does not preserve the being He has given us, and which we should at once lose if He ceased to maintain it, or withdrew His sustaining hand.

¹ 2 Mach. vii. 22.

From what has been hitherto said on the subject of our creation let us deduce two conclusions of the highest utility towards the proper regulation of our lives. The first is, that by the very fact of our creation God possesses complete and absolute dominion over us, as His property. If the artisan is master of his work, the sculptor of his statue, the painter of his picture, though to these things they have given only their accidental form and figure and not their being, how much more just is not God's title to be regarded as our master, since He has given us our being and preserves it for us ?

Hence the general obligation we are under of serving Him, and of devoting to Him and to His honour the whole being we have received from Him—body, soul, feelings, faculties. Hence, also, the particular obligation of perfect resignation and conformity to His divine dispositions in our regard. If He is our absolute Lord, He can command and forbid us as He wills. He can raise us up, or cast us down, enrich us or make us poor, give us health or take it away, preserve our lives or hand us over to death ; and it is our duty to submit and to bow down before Him without complaint, in whatever state it pleases Him to place us ; *Shall not my soul be subject to God ?* If we would only reflect seriously on this truth, there would be less lamentation, less complaint, and less blasphemy against God's decrees.

The second conclusion to be drawn is this, that God, having in our creation composed us of two different substances, the soul and the body, which, since the sin of Adam, have been in opposition and conflict with each other, we should subject the inferior part to the superior—the body to the soul—and always give to the latter pre-eminence and first place.

To act otherwise would be a perversion of the due order of things ; it would be downright disorder ; for it would be equivalent to setting higher value on what is worth far less. And who is there who, possessing a precious stone in a casket, would be so foolish as to set higher value on the casket, however beautiful and elegant it may be, than on the stone contained therein ? Assuredly no one. Yet is not a similar piece of folly repeated day after day ? What comparison can there be between the shell of flesh which covers us and is mere slime of earth, and the soul itself which we bear within us and which is a heavenly ray, an image and a participation, of God ? Why, then, do we, at the great risk of our soul, study to satisfy the body and its depraved desires ?

Not only this, but to act thus is to act like the brute beasts which, having no reason, follow the blind desires of the senses alone ; it is to imitate through vice that which brutes do by nature,—abominable conduct severely reproved by Sacred Scripture : *Man when he was in*

*honour did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and become like to them.*¹ Oh, shameful degradation!

And, finally, to act thus is to spoil God's work and disfigure the image that is divinely impressed on the soul. What a sin and a shame, we should at once exclaim were we to see anyone injuring or disfiguring a great painting! But are not the sins which defile the heart so many blots on the living and true image of God? Alas, that in the souls of many it is almost impossible to recognize God's image and likeness—so much are they stained, defiled, and deformed by vice and disorder! *They became abominable, as those things were, which they loved.*²

Open your eyes, then, to the grandeur, the nobility, the dignity of your soul. "Learn thine own dignity," says St. Chrysostom. And all the more so inasmuch as this soul, created to the image of God, is also destined to enjoy Him for all eternity. Do not, then, abase it to things earthly and vile—to do so would be an unpardonable indignity, just as much as if the son of a great monarch, destined to wear the crown, were to lower himself to the condition of a labourer in the fields.

God's intention in rendering us like to Himself by nature is to enable us by His divine assistance to become like to Him also by grace, so that we may one day be perfectly like Him in glory, when we shall be divinely transformed into Him, and become one with Him through love and the beatific vision: *We know, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him.*³ And should we not co-operate with all our strength to obtain this glorious end—valuing our souls, cultivating them, sanctifying them? Let it suffice for us to know that our end is not separated from our dearest and truest interests: since we shall possess all good if we are saved, or all evil if we are lost.

¹ Ps. xlviii. 13.

² Osee ix. 10.

³ 1 John iii. 2.

Twelfth Instruction on the Creed

THE END FOR WHICH MAN WAS CREATED

IN a former instruction we considered the creation of our First Parents, and tried to form therefrom some idea of the blessing conferred on us by our own. But before attempting to describe the happy state in which Adam and Eve came forth from the hands of God, it is essential to know the end He proposed to Himself in creating man,—a sublime, supernatural end, from which man fell away through sin, but to which he has been mercifully restored through the merits of Jesus Christ. In the state of vitiated nature corrupted by original sin this end is exactly what it was in the state of nature, innocent and incorrupt. Let us, then, in the first place, see what is that end, and secondly, let us study its importance.

I. To the question : Why were you created ? you were taught from your infancy to answer : To serve God in this life, and enjoy Him in the next. Quite right—here we have the two ends on account of which God brought us out of nothing—the one leading to the other as the means leads to the end,—the service of God in this life assures us the enjoyment of God in the next : *You have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting.*

But it is by no means enough to recognize this truth in a mere abstract manner ; we must also thoroughly grasp it—a thing that cannot be done by children, owing to want of judgment, and is left undone by many adults, owing to want of reflection.

Man's first proximate and immediate end, then, is to serve God in this life by observing His holy law, and fulfilling His divine will. God need not have created us ; but once He has done so He could have no other end in view than Himself and His glory : *The Lord hath made all things for Himself.* As He is the sole source of our being, so He wills to be our sole end, reserving to himself and to His glory the whole being which He has given us. This does not mean that our homage is necessary to His happiness ; but the sovereign dominion which He has over us gives Him an essential, inalienable right to exact homage, service, and dependence from us, His creatures.

And, if we readily recognize this right in the sovereigns of the

earth, shall we not recognize it much more readily in God ? For this He has created us only a little below the angels : *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels* ; for this He has given us, in preference to the lower creatures, an intellect capable of knowing Him, and a will capable of loving Him ; and for this too He has given us His holy law, and the means of observing it.

Such, then, is our primary, essential obligation here below. We are not in the world simply to amass a fortune ; nor to acquire esteem and reputation ; nor to live amidst pleasure and delight. No, this is not and cannot be our end on earth. We are here to serve God, to honour Him, to glorify Him. To this end we must subordinate all the occupations imposed on us by our state in life ; for all these can, and actually do, serve our principal end if they are but discharged with a view to God and according to His will ; but in themselves they are not our end. Our end is, by their means, to serve God who has placed us in this or that particular state of life. In one word, to serve the Lord—such is everyone's affair, no matter what one's state or condition. It is the affair of the artisan in his workshop, of the merchant in his shop, of the lawyer in the court, of the soldier in the camp ; it is the affair of sovereign and of subject, of servant and of master, of rich and of poor. It is not necessary to follow one career rather than another ; but it is necessary to serve God, whatever one's position in life : *This is the whole man*, says the Lord. Jesus Christ Himself during the course of His mortal life had no other end in view than to accomplish the will of His heavenly Father ; nay, He declares that for no other purpose did He come on earth : *I always do the things that please Him ; I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me*. And how can we imagine that we are dispensed from the same duty ?

From this you will infer that if here below we have any other end than the service of God, our life is nothing more than a mistake, an error, a useless effort. A thing is useful or of value only in so far as it serves its end. Of what use is a beautiful watch to me if it does not keep time ? or a fine pair of glasses if they do not help my sight ? or a knife, if it does not cut ? or a key, if it does not open ? In like manner if we wander and fall away from our last end by neglecting the service of God, our life and all our actions are valueless. The world may, indeed, regard us as men of genius, of courage, of foresight, because our talents and our industry have improved and built up the position for us ; but if amidst our cares and efforts we neglect the service of God and the salvation of our soul, the Lord will not, and cannot, regard us in any other light than that of indolent and unoccupied men, nay, as refractory and rebellious subjects, inas-

much as we oppose His designs and refuse Him the service which is His inalienable right.

But even though we were not in duty bound to serve Him as our Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Lord, should we not at least do so through self-interest, seeing that He is to be our sovereign Remunerator? Beyond all doubt; for what, in the divine plan, is to be the result of the service which He demands of us for a few short years in this life, if not that we may enjoy Him for ever in the next? This precisely is our last end; and it would be hard to say which should cause us most wonder—the goodness of God or our own blindness and stupidity. Sovereign Lord and Master as He is of all things, Almighty God could certainly have obliged us to serve Him without any recompense, and we should have had to regard ourselves as honoured thereby. He could have assigned us a temporal and limited recompense,—for instance, a hundred thousand years of happiness in a terrestrial paradise,—and we should have been amply repaid for our services. But no; for a few days spent in His service in this life, the Lord in the richness of His mercy has deigned to hold out to us an eternal reward, which is nothing less than the possession and fruition of Himself for all eternity: *I shall be thy reward exceeding great.* Such is the sublime end which He has destined for us—to live with Him, to reign with Him, to be happy with Him, not merely for some time, but for all eternity. Can we imagine a nobler, a more sublime end than this? It is the end of all the angels, of all the saints, of the Blessed Virgin,—nay, it is the end of God Himself, who can have no other end than the enjoyment of Himself.

You will hence understand how great are our obligations towards Him who has created us in preference to so many others, and who in preference to so many others has raised us to this supernatural end. Without the first gift of existence there never could be either grace or glory for us, as for so many others who have remained and shall for ever remain in the abyss of nothingness. But these obligations, which are common to all men without exception, apply in a special manner to us Christians, who can more easily than all others attain the end for which we have been created. Yes, of all men in general it can be said with truth that they have been created by that God, who *wishes all men to be saved*, to serve Him in this life, and to enjoy Him in the next. True, indeed, that with regard to a large number, we cannot know the providential ways by which God enables them to work out their salvation; yet we are sure and certain that essential Goodness never permits a single one to be lost without his own fault. But as far as we ourselves are concerned, there can be no doubt or mystery, since in preference

to so many others we have been openly and evidently placed by God on the one true, straight, unerring path which leads to Him,—we have been born in the bosom of the true Church, we have been adopted into the sonship of God by the waters of Baptism, and we have amply at our disposal many sacraments, many graces, many helps. With what zeal and care should we not therefore correspond with the intentions of God, and make sure of that happy end to which He has destined us? What service, what homage, can we render which is not infinitely inferior to that reward which the Lord reserves for us? But it is precisely here that you will find the monstrous contradiction that exists between our conduct and the goodness of God,—we live in utter forgetfulness of this end; like heathens we are occupied here below in anything at all, but its attainment; we give it the last place, and we expose ourselves to the risk of losing it at every step.

We are surprised and astonished when we read in Holy Scripture the recital of the imbecility of Esau in selling his birth-right to his brother Jacob for a mess of pottage. But greater far is the folly of those Christians who, for a miserable gain, a vile pleasure, a wretched satisfaction, renounce their right to the kingdom of heaven. We do not reflect at present; neither did Esau reflect on what he was doing; *He went his way, making little account of having sold his first birth-right.*¹ But when he did reflect on his folly, with what grief and despair was he afflicted! *And he wept with a loud cry.* Such also shall be our fate: we shall groan in rage and despair at the irreparable loss, but all in vain—it will be too late.

II. Let us in the second place consider the importance of our end, so that we may follow it seriously.

Last end and *happiness* are two expressions meaning one and the same thing; for that, and that alone, can be our last end, which can satisfy our desires, which can render us happy, and without which all the rest could not satisfy us. What amount of temporal goods could ever satisfy the human heart? Pleasures, honours, riches—all that the world esteems and seeks after,—are things devoid of all real worth, and still leave their lovers and votaries without solid content, as each one experiences within himself, and as was experienced in a striking way by the happiest man on earth, King Solomon, who, though abounding in everything the heart of man could wish, nevertheless cried out: *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, and affliction of spirit.* No; no created being can make happy the soul which is so far superior to all earthly things; and consequently no creature can be

¹ Gen. xxv. 34.

our last end. The capacity of our heart is so vast that nothing outside God, our infinite good, is capable of satisfying it. God alone served by us here on earth can make us find true peace and the greatest contentment it is possible for us to have here below ; and then, God possessed by us in heaven will constitute the perfect crown of all our desires : *I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear*. God alone, then, is our last end ; and hence it is as important for us to possess Him as it is to attain our one real, supreme, perfect end, and to appease, once for all, that unquenchable thirst for happiness which we experience within us.

But this is not all : The loss of God could perhaps be borne, if in losing Him and eternal bliss, we had nothing else to fear. But who is not aware that we cannot lose the greatest of all goods, eternal happiness, without falling into the greatest of all evils, eternal damnation ? So much does God desire that we should possess Him that He threatens us with unending evils if we do not succeed. He has placed us between two eternities, one of which is inevitable,—that of being eternally miserable or eternally happy, in joy for ever or in sorrow for ever, with God in heaven or with the devils in hell. “ One of two things—happy for ever with the saints, or tormented for ever with the damned.” Oh, terrible alternative ! But if it is inevitable, and if our own choice is to decide our eternal lot, what affair can be more important ?

From all this it is clear that to serve God in this life and enjoy Him in the next is, strictly speaking, that *one thing necessary*, of which Jesus Christ speaks in the Gospels ; that one thing the loss of which cannot be supplied by the acquisition of the whole world : *What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul ?* ; that one thing which, sooner than lose it, we should be ready to suffer the loss of an eye, an arm, or a foot : *pluck it out, cut it off, cast it away* ; that one thing, to acquire which we must be prepared to spare nothing and to suffer all, even the agony of death : *Strive for thy soul*. Nay, was not the attainment of this one thing necessary the object of the sorrowful mystery of Christ crucified ? Is not this, too, the end and aim of the whole order of grace, of the ministers whom He has established to direct us, of the sacraments which He has instituted to sanctify us, of the supernatural lights, the presence of our angel guardian, the protection of the saints, the Holy Sacrifice, and indulgences ? All tend in one direction—the attainment of our last end.

Here, then, we have a series, a chain, a methodical gradation of simple, plain, evident truths, all of them contained in those few words which you repeat over and over again : “ To serve God in this life, and

so to enjoy Him in the next." And now, what fruit should we draw from this fundamental truth?

There are some Christians who, either because they are the slaves of their passions, or because they are slothful and unwilling to make the slightest effort, derive from these words nothing but secret despair, even going so far as to lament that they were ever born, and that they were not allowed to remain in the abyss of nothingness. Now this state of mind, which would be unjust and unreasonable in a pagan, is impious and blasphemous in a Christian. How can it be said that God has done us wrong in creating us out of nothing, when at the same time He has destined us to eternal happiness, and given us the means of attaining it much more easily than thousands of others? No, you say, it would be no misfortune if I could only attain it; but I see only too well that I shall be lost. But if you are lost, it will be altogether your own work, and due to you alone. Will his damnation be imputable to an idolater, and not to a Christian? Make no mistake—there is no power, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor in hell, that can prevent us from attaining eternal happiness, if we ourselves are not so mad as to effect our own ruin with our own hands, opening hell beneath our feet by our own sins,—sins which God does not desire, which He helps us to avoid, and against which He has so fortified us that He Himself, although omnipotent, cannot make us commit even a single one, if we do not wish to do so of our own free will.

Such a conclusion, then, is not the proper one to draw from this great truth. Quite the contrary. And what is it? Here it is, expressed in three conclusions legitimately deduced from what has been already laid down.

(a) The first is to keep as much as possible before our eyes, and often to reflect on, the end for which we have been created, so that it may afford us light and strength to direct our actions aright. It is a mark of the brute beast to live by chance and to act unthinkingly. What, in fact, is the source of all our irregularities but forgetfulness of our last end? It is also the reason why, though created for God, we live only for ourselves, care for nothing but the material, sensible things of this life, and keep our eyes always fixed on this earth as if we had been created for it alone.

(b) The second is to look on the things of this world, not as ends in themselves, but simply as means which God has given us to attain our end. And as means are valuable only in so far as they conduce to their end, and as they are harmful if they turn us aside from it, so we should neither desire nor seek after the things of earth for their own sake, but only in so far as they help us to attain our last end,

From this it naturally follows that we should accept with calm and tranquil soul whatever it pleases God to send us,—health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, pleasure or pain ; for each one of these paths can conduct us to eternal life ; and moreover, we should regard as the safest that which He chooses for us. Nay, considering our blindness and inability to distinguish between good and evil, we should conform ourselves unreservedly to His will, and beseech Him to dispose of us as He thinks best,—to deprive us of health, riches, prosperity, if such things were to stand in the way of our eternal salvation,—and to send us in their stead, sickness, poverty, and tribulations, if these means are the road which is to lead us to Him : “ Here burn, here cut, here spare not, that Thou mayst spare hereafter.”

(c) The third and last point is that we should abhor and avoid as much as possible that great enemy of ours which alone can deprive us of our last end—sin. Nothing else can come between us and our last end. Nay, instead of being obstacles to our last end, poverty, infirmity, persecution and the like are easy means of attaining it. Sin, by placing us in opposition to Almighty God, and making us His enemies, and therefore deserving of His chastisements, can alone deprive us of that state of happiness to which God calls us. Let us, then, avoid sin with the greatest care, if we do not wish to expose ourselves to such a fearful loss. Such are the practical conclusions to be deduced for our spiritual advantage from the truth we have been considering to-day.

When we shall have arrived at the last hour of our life, and when the deceitful world will be fast fading from our vision, oh ! how we shall then realize the emptiness and worthlessness of those things which engross our attention here below, and, on the other hand, the importance of the end for which God created us and placed us in the world. What a vivid light will then perfuse the soul !—a light bringing unspeakable comfort, if only we have seriously applied ourselves to the attainment of our last end ; but a light of unspeakable regret and despair, if we have not. All will then be at an end—trials and mortifications as well as pleasures and enjoyments ; but the soul which we shall have saved or lost, as the case may be, together with the good or evil consequences of our conduct, shall remain for ever. Let us think seriously on our last end while there is still time, if we do not wish to be overwhelmed by eternal despair.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD

1.—The Second Article and its utility.

THAT the advantages accruing to the human race from belief in and profession of this article, are copious and wonderful, is shown by the declaration of St. John : *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in Him, and He in God ;*¹ and by the happy lot proclaimed by Christ our Lord as the reward due to the Prince of the Apostles : *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona ; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father, who is in heaven.*² For this truth is the most solid foundation of our salvation and redemption.

I.—ORIGINAL SIN

2.—Greatness of the blessings propounded in this Article.

But as the fruit of this marvellous blessing may be best understood by considering their fall from that thrice happy state wherein God placed our first parents the pastor shall be careful to make known to his flock the common cause of all our miseries and misfortunes.

When Adam had fallen away from the obedience he owed to God, and had violated that prohibition : *Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat ; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat ; for on what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt surely die,*³ he was overtaken by the dire misfortune of losing the holiness and justice in which he had been placed, and of becoming subject to the many other evils which the Council of Trent has explained at great length. On the other hand, the pastor will explain that this sin and the punishment due to it were

¹ John vi. 15,

² Matt. xvi. 17.

³ Gen. ii. 16.

not confined to Adam alone, but have been justly transmitted from him, as from their seed and source, to all his posterity.¹

3.—Christ alone
could restore
mankind. Having thus fallen from his high dignity, man could not possibly be again raised up and restored to his former state by any power of men or angels. There was one sole remedy available to repair his ruin and wretchedness. This was, that the Son of God, in His infinite power, should first assume our frail nature, and then take on His own shoulders the infinite weight of our sins and reconcile us to God by His blood.

4.—Without faith
in the Redemp-
tion none could
ever be saved. Now belief in the redemption, and confession thereof, are and always have been necessary to salvation, as God from the beginning had shown. In that first condemnation of mankind which followed straight upon sin, hope of redemption was held out in these words by which God made known to the devil the loss he would sustain by the redemption of the human race : *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed—she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*²

In after times He often confirmed that promise and made known His design in a more distinct way, especially to those to whom He deigned to witness a singular love ; amongst others, the Patriarch Abraham, to whom He revealed this mystery several times, and particularly on that occasion, when, in obedience to God's command, he was about to offer up his only son Isaac in sacrifice : *Because thou hast done this thing and hast not spared thy only begotten son for My sake, I will bless thee and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the seashore. Thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice.*³ From these words it could readily be inferred that one of the seed of Abraham was to bring deliverance to all men, and free them from the cruel tyranny of Satan. The Son of God, then, according to the flesh, was to be born of the seed of Abraham.

Not long after, to preserve the memory of this promise, the Lord renewed the same covenant with Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. When, as the Scripture testifies, he *saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching*

¹ Conc. Trid., sess. v., can. 2.² Gen. iii. 15.³ Gen. xxii. 16-18.

heaven, and angels of God also ascending and descending by it, he also heard the Lord, standing on the ladder, saying to him : *I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac ; the land wherein thou sleepest, I will give to thee and to thy seed ; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth ; thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east, and to the north, and to the south ; and in thee and in thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed.*¹

As time went on, God did not cease to renew the memory of His promise, and to excite in the race of Abraham and in many other men the expectation of a Saviour. As soon as the Jewish republic and religion had been established, the expectation began to be better known to the people—types signified and men foretold the many wonderful benefits the Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ was to bring. The Prophets, whose minds were illuminated with the light of heaven, foretold the birth of the Son of God, the wondrous works which He was to perform when He became man—His doctrine, character, life, death, resurrection, and many other mysteries regarding Him—and all this as plainly as if done under their eyes ; so much so that, excepting the diversity of past and future time, there is no difference that we can see between the prediction of the Prophets and the preaching of the Apostles—between the faith of the Patriarchs of old and our own faith. We now turn to the several parts of this article.

II.—JESUS CHRIST

5.—The name
Jesus properly
applied to
Christ.

Jesus is the proper name of Him who is both God and man. It signifies Saviour, and was given to Him, not by chance nor by the choice or will of man, but by the counsel and command of God. It was thus that the Angel addressed Mary, His Mother : *Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus.*² And later on, this same Angel not only commanded Joseph, the Virgin's spouse, to give the Child that name, but he also explained the reason why the Infant should be so called : *Joseph, Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived of her is of the Holy Ghost ; and she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.*³

¹ Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.

² Luke i. 31.

³ Matt. i. 20.

6.—The name ^{sometimes given to other men.} It is true that in the Sacred Scriptures we find several who were called by this name, such as the son of Nave, who succeeded Moses, and—a privilege denied to the latter—led into the land of promise the people whom Moses had delivered out of Egypt. The son of Sirach of Jerusalem was called by the same name, as was Josedeck, whose father was a priest. But how much more truly ought we not to consider the name applied to our Saviour, who brought light, liberty, and salvation, not merely to one nation, but to all men and all ages—men oppressed, it is true, by no famine, and no Egyptian or Babylonian captivity, but sitting in *the shadow of death*, and fettered by the galling chains of sin and of the devil; to Him who purchased them a right to the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven; to Him who reconciled them to God the Father? In the personages mentioned above we see foreshadowed Christ our Lord, by whom the blessings already enumerated were poured out on the human race. Moreover, the other names given by divine command to the Son of God are all comprised in this one name, *Jesus*. They only partially signify the salvation which He was to purchase for us; but the name of Jesus includes the full force and meaning of the redemption of all mankind.

7.—Meaning of the name Christ. To the name of Jesus is added that of *Christ*, which signifies *the anointed*, and is expressive of both honour and office. It is not a proper name, but is common to many; for of old the Fathers were accustomed to call by the name of Christs those priests and kings whom God had commanded to be anointed on account of the dignity of their office.¹ Priests are those who commend the people to God by assiduous prayers, offer sacrifice to Him, and appease His wrath. Kings are they to whom the government of the people is entrusted, and to them chiefly it pertains to have the authority of the laws respected, to protect the lives of the innocent, and to punish the guilty. And as both of these functions seem to represent the majesty of God on earth, those who were chosen to discharge the kingly or priestly offices were anointed with oil.² It was customary also to anoint the Prophets, who, being the interpreters and ambassadors of the immortal God, unveiled the secrets of heaven, and by salutary precepts and predictions of the future exhorted men to amend their lives.

¹ 1 Kings xxvi. 9; 1 Paral. xvi. 28; Ps. civ. 15; Exodus xxix. 7; Exodus xl. 13; 1 Kings ix. 16.

² Levit. viii. 11; Numb. iii. 3; 1 Kings xvi. 13.

But Jesus Christ our Saviour, coming into the world, took on Himself these three charges, these three offices, of Prophet, Priest and King—on which account He was called Christ, became anointed for the discharge of the functions in question—not by any human agency, but by the power of His heavenly Father; not by earthly anointing, but by spiritual oil. Into His most holy soul were poured the fullness and grace of the Holy Ghost, and a more abundant measure of every gift than any other created being was capable of receiving. The Prophet plainly showed this when, addressing the Redeemer Himself, he said : *Thou hast loved justice, and hatest iniquity ; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.*¹ And the Prophet Isaias declared the selfsame thing, but much more plainly, in these words : *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me ; He hath sent Me to preach to the meek.*²

Jesus Christ, therefore, was the great Prophet and Master³ who has taught us the will of God, through whose teaching the world has received the knowledge of the heavenly Father, and to whom the name of prophet pre-eminently and most justly belongs. All others who were honoured with the title of prophet were but His disciples, sent principally to foretell the coming of the Prophet who was to save all men.

Christ was also a Priest, not indeed of the same order as the priests of the tribe of Levi under the Old Law, but of the order of which the Prophet David sang : *Thou art a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech*⁴—an idea which the Apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, develops with great care.⁵

Finally, we acknowledge Jesus Christ to be King, not only as God, but also as man, and partaker of our nature. Of this the Angel is a witness : *He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end,*⁶ a kingdom which is spiritual and eternal—begun on earth, perfected in heaven. And admirable is the providence with which He discharges the duty of King towards the Church. He governs her; He guards her from the assaults and the snares of her enemies; He gives her laws; He bestows on her not only holiness and justice, but strength and the means to persevere. True, indeed, the bad as well as the good are found within the Church's kingdom—all without exception by right belong to it; yet, above all others, those who lead a sinless and innocent life, in keeping with His

¹ Ps. xliv. 8.⁴ Ps. cix. 4.³ Is. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18.⁵ Heb. v. 6,² Deut. xviii. 15.⁶ Luke i. 32.

Commandments, experience the supreme goodness and bounty of our King. Nor, though descended from a most illustrious line of kings, did that kingdom become His by right of succession or any other human right; but He is King, simply because God has united in His person all the power, dignity, and majesty that human nature was capable of. To Him, therefore, God gave the government of the whole world; His rule is now in operation; and to Him shall all things be made fully subject on the day of judgment.

III.—HIS ONLY SON

8.—Son from all eternity,
By the words *His only Son* still more sublime mysteries are proposed to the belief and contemplation of the faithful regarding Jesus Christ, that is to say, that He is the Son of God, and true God like the Father who has begotten Him from all eternity. Furthermore, we confess that He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, equal in all things to the other two Persons. In the divine Persons nothing unlike or unequal can exist or be imagined to exist, since we acknowledge the essence, will and power of all three to be one and the same. This is clear from many oracles of Holy Scripture, but especially from the testimony of St. John : *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*¹

When, however, we are told that Jesus is the Son of God, we must guard against thinking that there is anything earthly or mortal in His birth. We must firmly believe and most devoutly adore that origin by which the Father has begotten the Son from all eternity—a mystery which reason cannot fully conceive or perfectly comprehend. Let us, then, bow down in wonder before this mystery, and cry out with the Prophet : *Who shall declare his generation?*² What we must believe, then, is that the Son has the same nature, the same power and the same wisdom, as the Father, as we confess in a more explicit way in the Nicene Creed : “ And in our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made.”

¹ John i. 1.

² Is. liii. 8.

9.—His eternal generation explained. Of all the comparisons employed to indicate the mode and nature of this eternal generation, that which is borrowed from the formation of thought in the soul seems to come nearest to the subject. Hence it is that St. John calls the Son the *Word*.¹ For as our mind, in some sort understanding itself, forms an image of itself, which theologians call the word (of the mind); so God—as far as human things can be compared with divine—understanding Himself begets His eternal Word. For the rest, it is better to contemplate what faith proposes, and with sincere heart believe and confess that Jesus Christ is at once true God and true man—that as God He is begotten of the Father before all ages; and that as man He was born in time of His mother, the Virgin Mary.

In acknowledging His two-fold nativity, however, we at the same time believe Him to be but one Son. For He is one person, in whom the divine and human natures meet.

10.—Christ's brethren. As regards His divine generation He has neither brethren nor co-heirs, since He is the only Son of the Father, whilst we men are simply His creatures and the work of His hands.

But if we consider His birth as man, He not only calls many by the name of brethren, but really treats them as such, since He admits them to share with Him in the glory of His paternal inheritance.² They are those who by faith have received Christ as Lord, and who in deed and in truth show forth by works of charity the faith which they profess in word. This is why He is called by the Apostle: *The first-born among many brethren*.³

IV.—OUR LORD

11.—Christ is our Lord according to each nature. There are several things narrated of our Saviour in the Holy Scripture, some of which clearly apply to Him as God, and some as Man. From His natures He derives the different properties of each; and hence we say of Him with truth that He is Almighty, Eternal, Infinite, and all this because of His divine nature; while, on the other hand, we say He suffered, died and rose again—all of which can apply only to His human nature. Moreover, other terms refer to both natures, as, for instance, the name of Lord, which we give Him in this article of

¹ John i. 1

² Rom. viii. 29.

³ Heb. ii. 12.

the Creed. If, then, this term be applicable to both natures, with good reason do we call Jesus Christ *our Lord*.

For, as He is eternal God, like the Father, so also, like the Father, is He Lord of all things. And as He and the Father are not two Gods, but one and the selfsame God, so likewise He and the Father are not two Lords, but one and the same Lord. For many reasons rightly is He called "our Lord," even as man. First of all, by the very fact that He is our Redeemer, and has delivered us from our sins, He has acquired over us the power by which He truly is and is called our Lord. For so the Apostle teaches: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death—even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.*¹ And He Himself after His resurrection thus speaks of Himself: *All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth.*²

In the second place He is called Lord, for this reason that in one person are united both natures, the human and the divine. By this wonderful union He merited, even without dying for us, to be constituted Lord of all created things in general, but especially of the faithful who obey and serve Him loyally and zealously.

12.—Practical reflections. It, remains, then, for the pastor to exhort his flock to remember that we derive our very name of Christian from Christ; that we cannot ignore His immense mercies towards us, especially as He has deigned to enable us to understand them by faith, and consequently that we above all others are strictly bound to devote and consecrate ourselves for ever, even as bond-servants, to our Redeemer and Lord.

Nay, this we promised at the doors of the church when we were being brought in to baptism. We declared that we renounced Satan and the world, and gave ourselves wholly up to Jesus Christ. Now if, when being enrolled as soldiers of Christ, we bound ourselves to the Lord by so holy and solemn a profession, what punishment shall we not deserve if, after entering the Church, knowing the will and laws of God, and receiving the grace of sacraments, we lead lives according to the maxims and precepts of the world and of the devil, as if on being cleansed in the waters of baptism we had become soldiers of the world

¹ Phil. ii. 8-10.

² Matt. xxviii. 18.

and of the devil, and not of Christ our Lord and Redeemer? But what heart will not be inflamed with love at the thought of the kindness and good will of so great a Lord, who, though He has us in His power and dominion as slaves, ransomed by His blood, yet surrounds us with such love as to call us, not servants, but friends and brethren.¹ Here indeed, is a just claim—the strongest perhaps of all—to induce us always to own, reverence, and adore Him as our Lord.

¹ John xv. 4.

THE SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught in the second article: "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord"?

A. The second article of the Creed teaches us that the Son of God is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; that, like the Father, He is God eternal, omnipotent, Creator and Lord; that He became man to save us; and that the Son of God, made man, is called Jesus Christ.

Q. Why is the Second Person called the Son?

A. The Second Person is called the Son, because He is begotten by the Father from all eternity by way of intelligence; and for this reason He is also called the Eternal Word of the Father.

Q. Since we also are sons of God, why is Jesus Christ called the only Son of God the Father?

A. Jesus Christ is called the only Son of God the Father, because He alone is His Son by nature, whereas we are His sons by creation and adoption.

Q. Why is Jesus Christ called our Lord?

A. Jesus Christ is called our Lord, because, not only did He, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, create us as God; but He has also redeemed us as God and Man.

Q. Why is the Son of God, made man, called Jesus?

A. The Son of God, made man, is called Jesus, that is to say, Saviour, because He has saved us from the eternal death merited by our sins.

Q. Who gave the name of Jesus to the Son of God, made man?

A. The Eternal Father Himself, through the Archangel Gabriel, gave the name of Jesus to the Son of God made man, at the moment when the Archangel announced to the Blessed Virgin the mystery of the Incarnation.

Q. Why is the Son of God made man also called Christ?

A. The Son of God made man is also called Christ, that is to say, anointed or consecrated, because kings, priests and prophets were anointed of old; and Jesus is the King of kings, Highpriest, and supreme Prophet.

Q. Was Jesus Christ really anointed and consecrated with a material anointing?

A. The anointing of Jesus Christ was not material, like that of the kings, priests and prophets of old, but wholly spiritual and divine, because the fullness of the Divinity dwells in Him substantially.

Q. Had men any idea of Jesus Christ previous to His coming?

A. Yes, previous to His coming men had some idea of Jesus Christ in the promise of the Messiah, which God made to our first parents, Adam and Eve, and which He renewed to the holy Patriarchs; and also in the prophecies and the many figures which foreshadowed Him.

Q. How do we know that Jesus Christ is truly the Messiah and Promised Redeemer?

A. We know that Jesus Christ is truly the Messiah and Promised

Redeemer from the fact that in Him are verified (1) all that the prophecies foretold, (2) and all that the figures of the Old Testament foreshadowed.

Q. What did the prophecies foretell of the Redeemer?

A. Regarding the Redeemer, the prophecies foretold the tribe and the family from which He was to come; the place and time of His birth; His miracles and the most minute circumstances of His Passion and Death; His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven; and His spiritual, perpetual and universal Kingdom, that is, the Holy Catholic Church.

Q. Which are the principal figures of the Redeemer in the Old Testament?

A. The principal figures of the Redeemer in the Old Testament are: the innocent Abel; the Highpriest Melchisedech; the sacrifice of Isaac;

Joseph sold by his brethren; the prophet Jonas; the Paschal Lamb; and the Brazen Serpent set up by Moses in the desert.

Q. How do you know that Jesus Christ is *true God*?

A. We know that Jesus Christ is true God: (1) From the testimony of the Father saying: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him; (2) from the attestation of Jesus Christ Himself, confirmed by the most stupendous miracles; (3) from the teaching of the Apostles; (4) from the unvarying tradition of the Catholic Church.

Q. Mention the chief miracles wrought by Jesus Christ?

A. Besides His Resurrection, the chief miracles wrought by Jesus Christ are: the restoring of health to the sick, of sight to the blind, of hearing to the deaf, and of life to the dead.

Thirteenth Instruction on the Creed

THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS

IN the eleventh instruction we considered man simply as he is by nature, that is to say, as composed of a body and soul, and hence we inferred his dignity and excellence. We have now to consider the particular state of Adam as he came fresh from the hands of God, and to bring home to our minds, by reflection on the privileges he enjoyed, but which we no longer possess, the misfortune caused by original sin—a sin which would indeed be a subject of bitter memory and inconsolable regret, if we were not comforted by the consoling thought of the superabundant reparation wrought by Jesus Christ in the Redemption.

It would be an error to believe that God in the beginning created man in the state of corporal and spiritual misery in which we find ourselves to-day. Holy Writ tells us that God made man *right*, that is, without defects or unregulated tendencies, nay, that He even endowed him with every quality that could render him perfect in soul and body.

The gifts received by our first parents were of two kinds—natural and supernatural. Amongst the supernatural gifts were : Sanctifying grace in which God created them ; the infused virtues ; the actual graces given them to enable them to persevere in their original justice ; and their destination to a heavenly, divine and everlasting inheritance.

Amongst the gifts of the natural order must be included what theologians call *original integrity*, which embraces many prerogatives, both spiritual and corporal :—

(1) The earthly paradise in which God had placed them. It was a place in which were found all sorts of delights—salubrious air, mild climate, exquisite fruit—everything in a word that could contribute to the well-being and the pleasures of life. The very name of Paradise, that is to say, *place of delight*, by which it was designated, indicates the felicity of that happy abode.

(2) The sovereignty and the dominion which He gave them over the earth, and over all animals. Over the earth which, docile and obedient, would have corresponded to Adam's labour—a labour attended by neither fatigue nor pain as at present, but sweet and

pleasant. Over the animals, every one of which, even the wildest and fiercest, would have been mild and obedient. Even now we still preserve a trace of this empire.

(3) Exemption from all pain, inconvenience, infirmity—even from death itself; for, though mortal in their natural condition, our first parents were immortal by special privilege of their Creator. It was for this purpose that the Lord had planted in the centre of the earthly paradise the *Tree of Life*, so called because its fruit possessed the virtue of preserving from death, restoring and renewing the body, and maintaining man in an ever-flourishing state of youth, until, having passed a certain length of time on earth, men were to be transferred to heaven, without having to pass through the gates of death.

(4) The wonderful gifts of intellect with which they were so copiously endowed, enabling them to know and understand creatures and their Creator, the world and God.

(5) The rectitude of will which, without the least effort, without any difficulty, could refrain from all that was wrong, and enjoy without excess or abuse all that was permitted, and which could act in all things for God, its last end, and ever remain in union with Him—a capacity due to the fact that in man God had subjected sense to reason, the flesh to the spirit; and hence man was exempt from those terrible combats and struggles which we experience in shunning evil and doing good.

Such were the gifts and such the privileges with which Adam was enriched by God from the first instant of his creation; and these we should still possess had he but remained faithful to God.

Now what was required of Adam in order to remain faithful to God? Nothing more than to abstain from eating the fruit of a single tree. It was the only positive precept which God imposed on him, as a sign of His own sovereignty—the only mark of obedience which He required of Adam as a condition for preserving in himself and transmitting to his descendants the gifts he had freely received. God had said to him: I give you complete liberty to eat of all the fruits in this place, but beware not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (called thus because of the evil effect it could and did produce): *Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat.* And He added the threat: *For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death*—brief words indeed, but comprising many a menace. It was the same as if the Lord had said: The moment you disobey you shall lose all your privileges; a father, guilty in My eyes, you shall engender unfortunate children only; you shall transmit your own sins to your descendants; and instead of the gifts I have bestowed upon you, you

shall hand down to them, as a baneful consequence of your sin, the legacy of death. Such was the meaning of the menace.

Now if God's honour and man's condition demanded that God should impose some precept on him, could He have imposed a milder, easier, more moderate precept than this? It meant nothing more than that Adam and Eve should do without one single fruit, while on the other hand God had granted them numberless other choice and magnificent fruits. Was it possible, then, that they could desire to eat of this, especially as they experienced no inclination to evil! It seems an inexplicable mystery to us that in spite of their native disinclination to sin, they nevertheless transgressed the divine prohibition. But after all, they were not impeccable; and then God was to derive such good from it, in repairing the evil, that He permitted their fall.

And how did that fall take place? Passing over minute details, which would detain us too long, the fact is in substance as follows: The devil, envying them their happy state, hid himself under the form of a serpent, and tempted Eve, assuring her that God's threat would not be carried into execution, even if they were to eat of the forbidden fruit—nay, he even made them believe that by eating it they should become greater in rank and condition—should, in fact, become equal to God Himself in knowledge. The foolish woman lent a ready ear to the tempter, was persuaded, stretched forth her hand to the fruit, plucked it and ate it. Oh, if she had only remained alone in her sin—if only Adam, the true head of the human race, had remained faithful—then, perhaps, the sin of our first mother would not have been fatal to her children, the heirs of their father's innocence! But Eve, now that she had fallen away, burned to make Adam the accomplice of her sin. She tempted him, and he could not say her no; to please her he partook of the fruit, and he too sinned: *She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat.*

Behold those two, then, both transgressors of the divine command, both disobeying God by an act of disobedience which, as the Fathers teach, involves the malice of many other sins, especially those of pride, gluttony, and infidelity. Behold them now—fallen away from the priceless advantages they enjoyed in the state of innocence! From that fatal moment all is changed, both within and without them. At once, they experienced their sin's sad effects—in the sudden darkening of their understanding; in the internal tumult of their passions; in their prompt expulsion from the garden of Paradise; in their bitter subjection to suffering, fatigue, illness, and death. Such was the knowledge they gained by their sin—not that which had been promised by the lying tempter,—but the sad knowledge that came from

experience of good rejected and evil incurred : *The eyes of both were opened.*

But, as already observed, the sin of our first parents was not prejudicial to themselves alone—by God's decree it was fatal to all their descendants. Our lot had been in some sort placed in their hands. Had they remained faithful to God, we should have inherited both their original justice and all the blessings attached to their state. But because they sinned, we have inherited their sin and all its evil consequences, both in soul and body. In the body, labour, sickness, sorrow, death ; in the soul, darkness of the intellect, weakness of will, disinclination to good, tendency to evil, opposition between flesh and spirit, loss of grace, and exclusion from eternal bliss.

Are all men, then, born sinners ? Yes ; all who have been and are and will be, if we except Jesus Christ by His nature, and His Mother by grace, as we shall see later on in the third article of the Creed,—all bear from their mother's womb the sin of our first parents. That sin is called *original sin*, that is, of birth ; that is, the sin of a nature sinful in Adam ; but at the same time, as the Council of Trent says, it is also our sin, inherent in each of us. This truth, though obscure, difficult, and humiliating to us, is a fundamental truth of Christianity ; and without its light, the Christian religion would be inexplicable. To avoid being over long, let us content ourselves with the celebrated passage of St. Paul to the Romans, where the Apostle teaches that as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death ; so death descended to all men because all have sinned in one : *By one man sin hath entered into this world.*

At this point presumptuous reason lifts its head, and will not accept such a mystery. How, it asks, how can we be guilty of a sin committed centuries and centuries before our very existence, and in which our will had no part whatever ?

Apart altogether from divine revelation, the fact that such sin has really been transmitted would be evidenced by the degradation of human nature which is only too visible and manifest, and which was recognized even by the pagans—I refer to the countless miseries to which we are subject, and above all to the mass of contradictions we experience within us. On one side, noble, lofty, heavenly desires ; on the other, low, animal, brutal passions. On the one side, esteem and love of virtue ; and side by side with this, a violent inclination to vice. What an incessant struggle, what a bitter combat, between the reasonable man and the sensual man, between reason and sense ! Do not the very children, even in their tenderest years, display evident signs of natural and ingrained perversity, in the rapid development of vicious tendencies ? How, then, can we explain the contradictions and

disorders of our nature without presupposing and accepting original sin?

I will not attempt to explain in what the nature of original sin really consists, nor how it is transmitted. These are two things which we do not know, and which we must not try to comprehend, but simply believe and adore, in virtue of God's holy ways, which, as St. Ambrose says, may indeed be unknown to us, but never can be unjust—a great and incontrovertible maxim which must be borne in mind every time our feeble reason feels itself unable to explain certain truths, and especially in such cases as the present, where, no matter what explanation is advanced, there still remain obscurity and difficulties obliging us of necessity to have recourse to faith, and to the profound and inscrutable, yet ever just and true, judgments of God.

On the other hand I must not omit to suggest certain reflections, calculated to remove or lessen our wonder in this respect. The first reflection is based on the fact that the privileges accorded by God to Adam were purely gratuitous. What right had men to the state of original justice and happiness in which Adam was created—a state which was due to the goodness and bounty of God alone? The Lord could, then, without the least injustice, refuse to grant that state to the children, in punishment of the faithlessness of their father. Even human justice, in hatred and detestation of certain crimes, inflicts penalties which affect not only the guilty, but all his family and descendants—confiscation of property, deprivation of office and honours. We ought not, then, to be astonished if, in punishment of the sin of our first parents, we are stripped of privileges that had been granted on a purely gratuitous title and as mere favours.

Moreover, as original sin is not simply a privation of gifts to which our nature had no right, nor simply a transmission of penalties—for in that case it would be no longer a mystery—but a sin transmitted to us; hence arises a second reflection still more solid and important than the first, and it is, that the dogma of original sin must never be separated from the dogma of the reparation wrought by Christ in atonement for it. These two articles stand side by side and mutually support each other. The Lord did indeed permit the fall of Adam and his descendants; but out of this evil He brought forth good. And how? In the place of the first beautiful order of creative providence in Adam, He substituted another and a better order of a restorative providence in Jesus Christ; redeeming us by a mystery glorious to God, and advantageous to man. Of what, then, have we to complain! Could we cry out against a person who, having broken a vase of exquisite workmanship, were to reunite the pieces and put them together in a still more perfect manner than

before? Certainly not. Now this is precisely our case. A man and a woman have done you a great injury, says St. Bernard; but praised be God, who through another Man and another woman, have restored all things to a better condition. We have gained more in Jesus Christ, says St. Paul, than we had lost in Adam. *But not as the offence so also was the gift.*¹

But where, you will ask, are these advantages if we are still subject, just as before, to the darkness of ignorance, to the tyranny of concupiscence, to all the miseries of life, to the necessity of death?

It is true that we no longer possess all the advantages of the state of innocence, but in place of these we have received others infinitely more precious. In the first place, with regard to supernatural gifts, which are the most important, that is, sanctifying grace and the right to our heavenly inheritance, these have been restored to us by Jesus Christ, whose merits are applied to our souls by means of the sacraments. As for the rest, we are subject, it is true, to infirmity and misery; but we are able to practise patience, mortification, penance, and many other virtues, unknown to the state of innocence—virtues infinitely more valuable than the exemption enjoyed by our first parents. On the other hand, these miseries have been left us as a permanent and sensible record of the unhappy state of sin from which Jesus has rescued us, and as a restraint to hinder us by the practice of these virtues from falling back into vice.

We are subject to death, it is true,—but death sweetened by that which Jesus Christ suffered on the Cross for us; and then, how much more glorious is it for us to rise again from the embrace of death, and triumph over it after the example of Jesus Christ, than to have never fallen under its power.

We no longer possess the tree of life—that life-giving plant that was to render us immortal; but what comparison is there between the tree of life and that of which it was a figure,—the Blessed Eucharist, in which Jesus Christ nourishes us with His own flesh, to enable us to blossom forth into a better immortality.

We have no longer the knowledge of intellect, but in its place God has substituted the merit and simplicity of faith, so that Jesus Christ could say: *Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed.* Our will is inclined to evil; but Jesus has merited powerful helps and graces for us by means of which, if we only use them well, we can with greater merit triumph over our weakness. And here I could appeal to the example of numerous saints of every rank and condition, and to the great and heroic deeds wrought by them, even

¹ Rom. v. 15.

though they, too, were children of Adam, and subject like us to the same infirmities.

What right, I repeat, have we to complain if in our present state everything contributes to our greater sanctification, and consequently to our more perfect happiness? If we consider only the evils caused by the sin of Adam, we certainly have ground for grief and sorrow; but if, on the other hand, we bear in mind the benefits conferred on us by Jesus Christ, we have a much stronger motive for consolation and for crying out with the Church: "Oh happy fault that merited such a Redeemer."

I well know that we are afflicted at seeing ourselves exposed in our present state to many miseries and trials; and that we imagine that it would be much better and happier for us to return to original innocence, to that first state of joy and peace. But, I ask: Does it belong to us or to God to decide what is better for us? A feeling of this kind is indeed dictated by our self-love, which is opposed to all suffering; but it is contrary to the views and designs of God who, in the new order of Redemption necessitated by the fall of Adam, wills to have us like to Jesus Christ our Redeemer—no longer modelled on the image of the first Adam, enjoying peace and delight in the earthly paradise, but on that of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, suffering and crucified for us—*Conformable to the likeness of His Son*,¹ as St. Paul says.

Now, in redeeming us, was not Jesus Christ subject, just as we are, nay more than we are, to all our miseries, sin alone excepted? Was He not tempted and tried in every possible way? Did He not will to undergo death itself? How, then, can we claim to be exempt?

How curious it would be were our condition different from that of Him who is Innocence and Virtue itself. Instead, then, of wasting our time in useless complaints about the ills caused by the sin of our first parents,—instead of uselessly sighing after a state that can never return,—let us turn our attention to making good use of the new order in which we are placed, that is to say, to the copious redemption wrought by Jesus Christ, through the merits of which, after a brief period of tribulation and trial, we can attain, as so many have done before us, a state of glory and bliss incomparably superior to anything we could have expected in the state of original innocence.

Such, then, is the one solid conclusion to be drawn from all that has been said thus far. To this precious divine Redemption, which destroyed the empire of Satan, which has reconciled us to God, and which has opened once more the gates of heaven to us, we shall turn out attention in the following articles of the Creed.

¹ Rom. viii. 29.

Fourteenth Instruction on the Creed

EXPLANATION OF THE WORDS: ONLY SON, AND JESUS

IN the first article of the Creed we have spoken of God and of the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. In the second article we begin to speak of the Second Person and the mysteries concerning Him—a most important subject disclosing to us a new order of things, that is to say, the work of the divine Incarnation of a God and of our redemption—a work far superior to that of creation, already explained in the first article, and so great that not even God Himself has done or can do greater. Our purpose, then, is to know and understand this Jesus Christ from whom we derive the name of Christians, who is the source of every blessing to us, and without whom we could not hope for eternal salvation. *This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*

I. To proceed with order and clearness: The second article proposes two things for our belief—first of all we are bound to believe that God the Father, of whom we have spoken in the foregoing article, has really and truly one only Son by nature, who is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. As the First Person is called Father, because of His own substance He has generated the Second Person from all eternity; so this Second Person is called the Son, because He has been begotten by the Father from all eternity.

To give us some idea of the divine generation of the Son of God, Holy Scriptures furnished two similitudes which are given by St. Paul as: *The brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance.*¹ The first example is derived from the sun, the source of all splendour and all light. Now as the sun produces light and has never been without diffusing it, so that light itself, though proceeding from the sun, is as ancient as the sun; so God the Father by His intelligence, which is the uncreated sun, generates the Son as a true Light, and has never been without generating this only Son.

The second example is taken from the most like and most perfect image of ourselves, which is formed in a mirror the instant we appear before it. In the same way God the Father looking into Himself as

¹ Heb. i. 3.

into a mirror, with the eye of His Intelligence, produces from all eternity an image perfectly like unto Himself. And as God has communicated to this image all His Being and all His substance (a thing we are unable to do to our image), that image of God is His true Son, consubstantial with Him, one and the same with Him.

But it is idle to seek to explain this matter by comparisons; for, as I have already observed, comparisons can but give the faintest idea of a mystery such as this, which in fact would cease to be a mystery if we could explain it by the material ideas which we have of earthly things. The generation of the Son of God is truly, as Isaias says, ineffable and incomprehensible: *Who shall declare His generation?* Suffice it, then, to know that in God there is a real generation, in virtue of which He who engenders is called Father, and he who is engendered, the Son; that this generation is eternal, so that the Father has always been Father, and has never been without the Son; that the Father, engendering the Son, communicates to Him all His divine perfections, without losing anything, so that the Son is equal to the Father in all things, and is one God with Him, though at the same time He is a distinct Person from the Father, since the Father always retains the quality of Father, and the Son the quality of Son; and finally that the fact of being the Second Person involves neither posteriority in time nor inferiority in power, just as the fact of being Father involves neither priority in time nor superiority in power. This is the teaching of our faith, and before it we must be content to believe and adore.

We also say *Only Son* because He alone is begotten of the substance of the Father. The Holy Ghost, as we shall see later on, has one and the same substance as the Father and the Son, from both of whom He proceeds as from a single principle; nevertheless He is not and cannot be called Son, because He does not proceed by way of generation but by way of procession. What the real difference is between the two forms, it has not pleased God to reveal to us. The Holy Ghost, then, is of the same substance, but He is not begotten.

On the other hand, we Christians have been engendered by God; He calls us His sons and recognizes us as such; but this generation, this sonship, is merely one of adoption, but not one of nature; and it is based on the fact that God through the merits of His only begotten Son has adopted us as His children and has raised us by grace to be what Jesus Christ is by nature.

In God, then, there is one only, truly-begotten Son, just as there is one only Father; and as the character of Father belongs to the First Person alone, so to the Second alone belongs the character of Son.

II. Let us now see how and in what sense the Son is called JESUS CHRIST. Here, as will be observed, the mystery of the Incarnation begins to reveal itself. The Son of God, who has always been God equal to the Father, has also become Man, without ceasing to be God. As Man He was begotten of the Virgin Mary by the power and operation of the Holy Ghost ; so that, as we shall see in the next article, while as God He has a Father but no Mother, as Man He has a Mother but no Father ; while as God He has been from all eternity, as Man He has had a beginning like us. Now this Son of God, in so far as He is simply God, is called the Only-begotten of the Father, Light, Wisdom, the Eternal Word ; while as God and Man together He is called Jesus Christ—two names which admirably express His excellence, and the glorious office which He came to discharge on earth. Let us examine their signification.

The first and principal name given to the Incarnate Son of God is the Adorable Name of *Jesus*—a name given Him, neither by chance nor accident, but by the direction and command of God Himself. *Thou shalt conceive in thy womb*, said the Angel Gabriel to Mary, *and thou shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus*. Now, what is the meaning of the name Jesus ? It means Saviour, Liberator, Redeemer ; and such precisely was the meaning assigned to it by the Angel Gabriel when he appeared to St. Joseph and said to him : *Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins*.

He is called Jesus, then, because He is our Saviour. In general, anyone who saves us from great danger, or pressing evil, may be called a saviour. Thus, if a friend casts himself into the midst of flames or into water to save us from fire or from drowning, we should call him our saviour. It is in this sense that the name of Saviour was given in the Old Testament to certain remarkable personages who had either freed the people from long-continued slavery, or had saved them from the disasters of war or the horrors of famine. But Jesus Christ is our Liberator and Saviour above and beyond all others, because He has delivered us from what can alone be properly called the one evil, and which alone deserves the name of evil—that is, sin and its consequences—since there was none other who could save us : *For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved*.

Fully to understand the extreme need we had of such a Saviour, we must call to mind the miserable condition into which we had been plunged by the double death of sin and of eternal punishment. We had merited the death of sin both by original sin which we bear from our very birth, and by the actual sins which we add to original sin

after reaching the use of reason—thus multiplying by new debts the old debt handed down to us by Adam. And the death of sin has brought in its train a second death, that is to say, eternal damnation—an inevitable, hopeless, irreparable destiny, if no Saviour had come to our rescue.

The reason is this, that we could not by our own unaided resources deliver ourselves from sin. To free ourselves from sin it was necessary to make to God that full and perfect satisfaction which was required of us. Now the extent of an offence is measured according to the dignity of the person offended ; while on the other hand the greatness of satisfaction is estimated according to the condition of the person who makes it. Now in the present case He who had been offended is God ; while he who had to make satisfaction was man. But between God and man there is an infinite distance ; there consequently could be no proportion between the offence and the satisfaction. No matter how holy, no matter how excellent, a mere creature might be, he would always be inferior to God, and consequently no matter what submission, penance, and satisfaction such a creature might offer to God, it would always be inadequate to satisfy for the offence. Being powerless, then, to acquit ourselves of the debt due to our sins, nothing remained for us but to pay the penalty for all eternity. Such was our deplorable condition—the slaves of sin, with no strength or means to break its bonds, continually impelled and carried headlong from error to error, from crime to crime, until finally we should be engulfed in the abyss of eternal damnation !

But God would not abandon us as He abandoned the rebellious angels. In His compassion for our misery He so loved us as to send His own divine Son to be our Sovereign Redeemer. And how ? In this way. Only a divine person could offer satisfaction of infinite value—therefore did the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity offer Himself to make satisfaction for us—and this fully in accord with the will of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, since whatever one of the Persons wills, the others also will in like manner, there being in all Three but one only will. But how could the Person of the Son of God satisfy for us as long as He had His divine nature alone ? To satisfy it was necessary to abase Himself, suffer, die—all of which are opposed to the very essence of God. Behold, then, that wonderful invention of Divine Wisdom which filled with awe the whole heavenly host : *The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us*. The Son of God, without ceasing for a moment to be God, became Man also, in order that, as man, He could suffer and die, and as God, could communicate infinite merit to His sufferings—sufferings which, in virtue of the hypostatic union, became the sufferings of a divine person.

Such is the mystery of condescension and ineffable goodness which the Apostle calls *the great sacrament of godliness*—a mystery prefigured in the inspired action of the Prophet Eliseus when restoring to life the dead son of the Sunamite woman. Drawing near the bed on which lay the corpse of the child, he stretched himself forth over it with his whole body, shortening and bending that body, however, so as to fit himself to the small stature of the child, and to join as far as possible mouth to mouth, eye to eye, hand to hand, foot to foot. By this contact, the stark cold body first began to grow warm, and then to move, and next to awake as if from sleep, and finally the eyes opened and new life returned. Who can fail to see in this incident a most expressive figure of the mystery of the Incarnation?

By the sin of Adam human nature was not only ill, but spiritually dead, like the widow's son. Not all the time that had elapsed under the law of nature, not all the period of the written law, not all the centuries before the Incarnation, had sufficed to restore it to life, as St. Paul observes: *If there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law*—just as in the case already mentioned the staff of Eliseus used by his servant Giezi did not suffice to revive the child. It was necessary to await a new Eliseus and He came in the law of grace, much greater than the first Eliseus. This new Eliseus was none other than the Only-begotten Son of God, sent by the Father to restore to us the life that had been lost. And how did He restore it? By humbling Himself, and, like to the prophet, making Himself small, so as to adapt His most high majesty to our lowliness, and His sovereign greatness to our nothingness: *He hath humbled Himself taking on Himself the form of a servant—The Word was made flesh.*

And when He had taken on Himself the lowly form of a man and of a slave, He could and did take the still more humiliating form of a sinner, by taking on His own shoulders the sins of all the world. Though sinless by nature, says St. Paul, he made our sins His own, if not in guilt at least in punishment: *Him who knew not sin, He hath made sin for us*—that is, the Father constituted His Son the victim for sin. And therefore He became the target of the irritated Justice of God, which no longer seeing in Him His own essential innocence and holiness, but only the hateful and abominable character of the sinner which the Son had assumed, exacted to the last farthing all the penalties due by us: *He was made accursed for us*, and by the payment of these penalties—by His bitter passion and death—He merited the remission of our sins, and all the long chain of helps and graces necessary for the beginning and the continuance and the attainment of our eternal salvation. Once a victim of expiation for us on Calvary,

He is henceforth and for ever our peace-offering, and a rainbow of hope in the heavens : *He is a propitiation for our sins.*

Such, then, is the sense in which the glorious title of Saviour is given to the Son of God, and such also is the way in which this name is so peculiarly and so specially His that, strictly speaking, it can be attributed to none other. He is our true, only, and universal Saviour : *True*, because it was not merely from poverty, infirmity, or other temporal disasters that He delivered us, but from sin which alone is rightly called evil, and is the poisonous root of every other evil ; *Only*, because none other could satisfy for us, and supply for our insufficiency, except a God made Man ; *Universal*, because none ever has been or ever can be saved but through Him. Hence even the just of the Old Law, who lived before His coming, could be saved by His merits only, which were applied to them by anticipation through their belief in a Redeemer to come.

And now, can we listen to all this and not be alive to the great and deep obligations we owe to our divine Saviour, who is the bounteous source of every blessing ? What confidence should we not place in His merits ? It can never be too much, provided it be properly directed, and neither rash nor presumptuous. *Properly directed*, I say, because it would be a poor return for so great a blessing to make it a pretext for rash and presumptuous confidence.

It would take too long to explain this dreadful abuse here ; besides, I shall have occasion later on to speak of true Christian confidence in Jesus Christ our Saviour. He is indeed our loving Saviour, but not in the sense imagined by many who ingeniously distort and abuse the simplest and most salutary truths of our faith. Many indeed there are who remember the words : *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just, and He is the propitiation for our sins* ; but what conclusion do they derive from this truth ? They draw the pernicious no less than absurd conclusion that our eternal salvation is an affair that God has completely taken on Himself ; and that, therefore, they need give no care nor thought to it themselves, but live in sin and look on their salvation as secure, in the very face of the most evident signs of reprobation.

What madness, what extravagance, what folly ! Is it not enough for Him to have given us a new life, at a time when our eternal death had been decided and decreed ? to have provided us with those graces, without which no penance of ours would be sufficient to save us ? to have made us capable of enjoying eternal happiness if we only so desire ? Is all this so small an act of mercy that we should seek to be relieved of every obligation ? Oh, let us banish from our minds an error so gross and so injurious to Jesus Christ. Far from us be

so monstrous and so pernicious a piece of folly! The Redemption accomplished by Christ, though most efficacious in itself, is useless to us without ourselves and our co-operation. "He who made thee without thyself will not save thee without thyself."

He has merited for us the pardon of our sins and has made ready for us a health-giving and vivifying bath in the august sacraments. Let us never despair, then, but let us make frequent use of these sacraments, and receive them with the proper dispositions. He has prepared every kind of help and grace to enable us at all times and in all places to fly evil and do good. But we must ask these graces by fervent prayer, and we must correspond faithfully with His divine help, by flying the occasions of sin, by custody of the senses, and by the exact and constant practice of Christian mortification. And finally, He has reopened the gates of Paradise to us. But this paradise, though it is on the one hand a free and most gracious gift of His charity, must at the same time be the recompense and the reward of good deeds and of a truly Christian life. It is on these conditions that He will be our Saviour. Otherwise the work of Christ will, through our fault, be useless and even injurious to us, since it only serves to encourage idleness, blindness, and impenitence.

Let us, then, change *our* ideas in this respect; and if we really desire that the glorious title of Saviour be verified in our case, and that it be not useless to us, let us strive to do our part in accomplishing the merciful designs which our Saviour has formed in our regard, at such great cost to Himself. This is the gratitude that He expects for all He has deigned to do for us; and this too is precisely what our own dearest interests demand.

But in this article the names of *Christ* and of *Lord* are added to that of *Jesus* given to the Son of God made Man, and these too call for explanation, which shall be given in our next instruction.

Fifteenth Instruction on the Creed

THE WORDS "CHRIST" AND "OUR LORD"

WE have examined the signification and the excellence of the name Jesus which the second article of the Creed gives to the Son of God made Man. But in the same article, two other titles are mentioned—*Christ*, and *Our Lord*—which must not be passed over in silence.

The word Christ signifies *anointed* or *consecrated*, and denotes the eminent dignities in our divine Saviour. As in the Old Law it was customary to anoint with oil kings, priests, and prophets, to enable them in their capacity as God's envoys worthily to discharge their duties and ministry ; so also the name of Christ, given to our Saviour, signifies that He, as man, was a great prophet, High Priest, and supreme King ; and that in this triple capacity He has been anointed and consecrated, not indeed by the hand of man, nor with material oil, but spiritually by His Heavenly Father with invisible oil,—that is, with the superabounding grace and power of the Holy Ghost which was poured over His sacred humanity in virtue of its intimate union with the Divinity, according to the expressions of the Psalmist: *He hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness* ; and of the Prophet Isaías: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me ; wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor*.

(1) First of all, then, Jesus Christ was a great Prophet, that is, a messenger sent by God as Teacher and Interpreter of His will. It was to make known to us the will of His Father, and to point out to us the way of salvation, that He came on earth. When only twelve years old He left the company of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph without being observed, and entering the temple He astonished the doctors of the Law by His discourse. During the last three years of His life He did nothing but pass from city to city, from town to town, spreading abroad His heavenly doctrine and confirming it by many miracles, so much so that He drew wondering crowds after Him, who continually cried out: *A great Prophet hath indeed arisen amongst us*—great by the truly divine authority with which He taught ; great by the wisdom with which He expounded the most hidden mysteries of the Divinity ; great by the power of His words, which He confirmed by wonderful works.

It could not be otherwise, for He was the true light of the world. All the other prophets sent by God from time to time, were only a figure of Jesus Christ, according to the prediction of Moses. And all other teachers who preach the truths of salvation are only His disciples, His instruments, and speak but in His name and by His authority. He is the one Teacher by excellence, the one whom God has commanded us to hear with respect and docility: *Hear ye Him.*

(2) In the second place, Jesus Christ was the High Priest, the Sovereign Pontiff, of our reconciliation. Before Him, there were and always had been, both in the law of nature and in the written law, priests set apart to pray for the people, and to offer sacrifice in expiation of the sins of men. But their priesthood had no virtue except in so far as it represented that of Jesus Christ, who is alone the Priest by excellence. The blood of victims, of bulls and of lambs, offered up in sacrifice, could not wipe out sins, except in so far it prefigured the blood of Jesus Christ immolated for us, and, strictly speaking, the only victim worthy of God. Jesus Christ, then, was the High Priest who offered the great sacrifice, that is to say, Himself, on the altar of the Cross; and each day He still continues to offer mystically on our altars by the hands of His priests, His body and blood for the sins of the world. Our priests, then, act and minister but in His name. Thus, when we see the priest at the altar celebrating Mass, we should through faith see Christ offering that sacrifice by means of His ministers; and the same thought should fill our minds when the priest baptizes, blesses, absolves, or confers any of the other sacraments. It is Jesus Christ who does all this through the instrumentality of His ministers. Hence you will understand how it is that the sacraments are always good, valid, and holy, even should the priest who confers them be unworthy. The reason is that the principal priest, who is Jesus Christ, is most holy; that it is He who, by their instrumentality, consecrates, baptizes, absolves, and confers all the other sacraments, which derive their value and holiness directly from Him.

(3) Finally, even as man, Jesus Christ was King and Supreme Monarch. And of what kingdom? His kingdom was, and is, principally spiritual, as He Himself protested: *My Kingdom is not of this world.* His Kingdom is His Church, that is, the body of the faithful which He governs by His holy laws, and which He has provided with powerful helps, enriched with graces, guarded and protected against all the assaults of hell; in a word, it is the kingdom of grace in this life, organized to lead us to a kingdom of glory in the next. But His kingdom was also temporal, since the Father had given Him dominion over all things—a dominion which had been conferred on

Him from the very first instant of His Incarnation and was confirmed in His Resurrection : *All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

Being King, Priest, and Prophet, then, rightly is He called Christ because of the spiritual and invisible anointing which He has received towards the exercise of this triple ministry ; just as being Redeemer of the human race, He is called Jesus because of the salvation and redemption which He has fully accomplished.

He is also called *our Lord*, a title which really and properly applies to Him, for two reasons : First because He is real and true Son of God, true God Himself, one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and therefore our Creator and Preserver. If the Father is Sovereign Lord and Master of all things because all things were created by Him, the Son is equally so, and for the self-same reason : *All things were made by Him.* The Sovereignty is one and indivisible among the Three Persons, just as the divine nature is one and indivisible.

The second reason is, that He has acquired a special title of sovereignty over us by purchasing us from the slavery of the Devil. For each one regards as his own property that which he has bought with his own money, and, being his own property, he considers he has the right to use it and dispose of it as he pleases. But how much more is Jesus Christ our master—He who has purchased us at so great a price, not indeed with gold and silver, but with His own substance, His own precious blood, His very life itself, the value of which is infinitely superior to all other things. So wrote St. Peter : *Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.* On the same principle St. Paul lays down that we are no longer our own, but Christ's ; that our soul, our heart, our body, all that we are and all that we have, are no longer ours but belong to Him, and that we are not free to use them otherwise than according to His will and in the way that He wills ; in a word, we are His in such a way that we can belong to no other Master : *You are bought with a great price ; be not made the bondslaves of men.*

I must not, however, omit to observe that the two titles of *Christ* and *Lord*, which this article adds to the name of Jesus, are inserted simply for the sake of greater clearness. For the name of Jesus contains in itself all titles, all qualities, all prerogatives. He could not be Jesus and Saviour without at the same time being our Master, our Priest, our King, our Supreme Lord.

Having now sufficiently explained the signification of the name Jesus and of the other titles that accompany it, we may conclude this subject by reflecting on the manner in which this adorable Name should be pronounced.

There are three great sentiments with which we should be penetrated in pronouncing this name—respect, love, and confidence.

(a) *Respect*, because it is a name full of majesty and grandeur ; it is a summary of all that pertains to Jesus Christ both as God and as Man ; and it comprises all the glory of the Word Incarnate : *Holy and terrible is His Name*. And as this Name was made a byword and a reproach by the world, so the Eternal Father has willed that it should become an object of the most profound respect and reverence. *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross ;* and therefore the Father in recompense of His humiliations and of His heroic obedience, willed to exalt Him in an infinite manner. He has given Him a throne above all other thrones ; has placed Him at His right hand on His own throne whence He governs the universe. *He sitteth at the right hand of God ;* and along with this has given Him a Name above every other name, at the mention of which every creature must bend the knee—reverently in heaven, suppliantly on earth, tremblingly in hell. *Wherefore God hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name above every other name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and in hell.*

We must not be surprised, then, if the Church, in her ceremonial, always pronounces the Name of Jesus with particular signs of veneration, and with greater reverence than even the name of God Himself ; for the name of God signifies God simply as Lord and Creator : whereas the Name of Jesus furthermore signifies Saviour and Redeemer. But how do we pronounce it ? It would assuredly be a deplorable abuse—a sacrilegious abuse—to use that Name unnecessarily, and without due reverence, as if it were an ordinary name, and to introduce it carelessly and uselessly into our conversations, and as a mere meaningless expression ; or worse still, to despise it, revile it, and blaspheme it, as is done by some in their transports of anger and fury. Let us bear in mind, then, that the Father is jealous, most jealous, of the glory of this Name, and will one day severely punish those who profane it. He has even given to His Divine Son a power above every other power, that of judging the world, in order that at the last day He may be solemnly compensated for all the injuries done Him, and be honoured and glorified by all men, even the most impious and blasphemous in spite of themselves. These reflections should excite in us a holy and salutary fear, which in its turn should make us profoundly respectful towards the Holy Name of Jesus.

(b) We must not, however, confine ourselves to respect—that would be small indeed. We ought in addition to repeat this Name with feelings of love, because it is a Name of ever-tender and loving memories. If, I ask, some one had done us a signal service, could we

think on him and hear his name mentioned without experiencing a feeling of tender affection in our hearts? But when we pronounce the Name of Jesus we name Him who has mercifully delivered us from hell, has reconciled us to the Father, and has done all this at the cost of the greatest of sacrifices, by taking on His own shoulders the punishment due to us and subjecting Himself in our stead to pain and sorrow and agony and the very extreme penalty meted out by the law to malefactors; and, what is more, doing all this voluntarily and with a lively desire to suffer still more, if more were necessary, for our salvation. Now shall not a Name which contains and awakes within us memories so dear as these be uttered with particular feelings of affection for our Great Benefactor? It was thus the saints pronounced it—because a lively faith made them sensible of the immensity of the benefits they had received. The glorious Name drew tears of tenderness from their eyes.

(c) To the two sentiments already discussed—those of respect and love—let us unite a third—that of lively confidence. For, on the one hand, the name is one of the greatest power and efficacy, and on the other, of infinite bounty and mercy.

Of the greatest power and efficacy. It is in this sense that we say there is under heaven no other name by which we can, in our miseries, hope for support, strength, and salvation: *For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved*—which means that Jesus Christ can do all things, nay, that no grace can come to us unless in Him and by Him, since in His capacity as Mediator He has acquired the right to give and distribute all graces, both spiritual and temporal. We know, in fact, that it was by virtue of this Name that the Apostles put the demons to flight—*In My Name they shall cast out devils*—gave sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, health to the sick, life to the dead. But if this Name wrought such wonderful miracles in favour of the body, what will it not do in favour of the soul? What miracles of light, strength, amendment, fervour, conversion, and relief in all our spiritual infirmities!

Nay, more: The sacraments have no sanctifying power but in the Name of Jesus Christ. Christian prayer from which all depends, when there is question of obtaining any grace, has no efficacy if not made in the Name of Jesus: *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name He will give unto you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My Name.* Finally, our works are truly good and deserving of eternal life, only in so far as they are done in the Name of Jesus who is the meritorious and operative cause of every good. This is why St. Paul specially recommends the intention: *Whatsoever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In a word, God does not recognize us as His, does not love us, does not listen to us, accepts nothing from us, but in the Name of Jesus Christ our Peace-maker, and our perpetual Mediator between Him and us. What use would be the power and efficacy of the Name of Jesus, if it was difficult to apply it and to profit by it? Far from us be such fear—the Name which is one of almighty power, is at the same time one of infinite *goodness and mercy*.

Having purchased us at the cost of so much ignominy and suffering, can we believe that He will not at all times be ready and willing to succour us, hear us, do good to us? What is there that He will not be disposed to do for us, after having given His blood and His life for us? A greater pledge and earnest than this we could not expect from even His infinite charity and inexhaustible condescension. And as if this were not enough, He makes known to us that, seated at the right hand of the Father, He ceaselessly exercises the offices of Advocate and Intercessor in our regard: *He asketh for us with unspeakable groanings*. Hence it is that He still retains in His glorified body the ever open wounds as so many mouths speaking and interceding for us.

If all this is really the case, with what confidence should not the heart be filled when we utter the Holy Name? Far, indeed, from us be that presumptuous diabolic confidence referred to just now, which promises us security and impunity in evil courses, and which is based on a very false notion of our Divine Saviour. Let us, indeed hope in Him, let us have boundless confidence in Him, for such confidence can never be too great; and let us repeat, with feelings of ineffable sweetness, the words said by the Apostle: *Jesus Christ is our hope*—our one and sovereign hope.

As a practical conclusion, then, let us learn to cherish this august, bountiful, and salutary Name as dearly as we ought to cherish our own salvation—let us learn to venerate it, to love it, to invoke it. Let us invoke it in temptations, and it will prove an impenetrable shield against the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil: *Through Thy Name we will despise them that rise up against us*. Let us invoke it in trial and adversity, and like a soothing oil it will mitigate the bitterness of our wounds and bring us peace and calm: *Thy Name is as oil poured out*. Let us invoke it in all our needs, spiritual and temporal, and we shall never want either light, support, strength, defence, or true and solid consolation.

As Christians—as followers and disciples of Christ—we should, till our last breath, always bear His Name deeply impressed on the mind, stamped on the tongue, engraven on the heart. In this way death itself will have no terrors for us; and when the Holy Name

shall be whispered in our dying ears by the priest who stands at the bedside, and when he holds before our eyes the dolorous image of Christ, we shall feel our hearts inundated with the most consoling confidence: "Jesus be Thou my Jesus, and save me." He will dispel our fears, strengthen our hearts, fill our breasts with a feeling of joy and comfort that will be at once hope, strength, peace, security. He will prove Himself truly our Saviour, before acting as our Judge, hiding us thus from the rigour of His terrible judgment, and making us find grace and mercy before Him. Oh, happy shall we be, if we only labour to become worthy of experiencing in that supreme moment the efficacy of His powerful Name.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE CREEI

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, AND BORN OF THE
VIRGIN MARY

1. — **General** THAT mankind was treated with signal and
meaning of this surpassing mercy, when God delivered us from
Article. the bondage of the cruel tyrant, the faithful will
 have understood from what has been already
 explained. But if, in addition to this, we consider the ways
 and means which He chiefly employed in doing so, it will appear
 that nothing can be more glorious and magnificent than this,
 His goodness and liberality towards us.

In explaining the Third Article, then, let the pastor begin
 by pointing out the grandeur of this mystery which Sacred
 Scripture over and over again proposes to our consideration as
 the fruitful source of our salvation. The meaning of the article
 is, he will show, that we believe and confess that the same Jesus
 Christ our Lord, the Son of God, in assuming human flesh in
 the womb of a virgin, has not been conceived, like other men,
 from the seed of man, but that, in a manner transcending the
 whole order of nature, *He was conceived by the power of the Holy
 Ghost*; ¹ so that the same Person still remaining God, as He was
 from all eternity, has become man, what He had not been
 before.

That such is the meaning of these words is clear from the
 Creed of Constantinople, which says: "Who, for us men and
 for our salvation, came down from heaven, and became incarnate
 by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made Man." St.
 John the Evangelist gives the same explanation of this pro-
 found mystery, and he drew his knowledge of it from the
 bosom of our Lord and Saviour Himself; for, having declared
 the nature of the Divine Word in these terms: *In the beginning
 was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,* ²

¹ Matt. i. 20.

² John i. 1.

he concludes thus : *and the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us.*¹

2.—No confusion of natures arose from the Incarnation.

For the Word, which is one of the Divine Persons, assumed human nature in such a way that there should be one and the same nature, one and the same person in both the divine and the human natures ; and hence it is that this wonderful union preserved the actions and properties of both natures, and, as the great and holy Pope Leo has it : “ Neither the glory of the divine nature absorbed the inferior nature nor did the elevation of the inferior lessen the glory of the superior nature.”

I.—WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST

3.—The work of the Incarnation though common to the Blessed Trinity is attributed to the Holy Ghost.

As the explanation of the terms used must be attended to, the pastor will take care to point out that in saying that the Son of God was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost we do not mean that this Person of the Blessed Trinity alone accomplished the mystery of the Incarnation. Although the Son alone assumed human nature, yet all the Persons of the Blessed Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—accomplished this mystery.

It is a rule of Christian faith, that whatever God accomplishes outside Himself in created things is common to all the Three Persons, and that no One of the Three does more than, or acts without, the other Two.

The only thing that is not and cannot be common to the Three Persons is the emanation of One Person from Another ; for the Son alone is begotten of the Father, while the Holy Ghost alone proceeds from the Father and the Son. But whatever proceeds from them externally is the work of the whole Three Persons, without any difference whatever ; and to this latter category belongs the Incarnation of the Son of God.

Even so, however, Holy Scripture often attributes to one or other of the Three Persons operations that are common to all, as, for example, supreme power to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and love to the Holy Ghost. Now, as the mystery of the Incarnation manifests the special and boundless love which

¹ John i. 14.

God has for us, it is therefore in some sort specially attributed to the Holy Ghost.

4.—In the Incarnation some things are supernatural, some things not.

In this mystery, it should be remarked, there are certain things which transcend the order of nature, and other things within the compass of nature. Thus, in believing the body of Christ to be formed from the most pure blood of His

Virgin Mother, we thereby acknowledge His human nature, since it is common to every human body to be formed of the blood of the mother. But what surpasses the order of nature and even the power of human comprehension is this, that as soon as the Blessed Virgin had given her consent to the message of the Angel, in the words : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word*,¹ the most sacred body of Christ was immediately formed ; to that body was united a soul capable of reason, and on that very instant He was both perfect God and perfect Man. That this new and wonderful effect was the work of the Holy Ghost can be doubted by no one ; for, according to the ordinary laws of nature, the rational soul is united to the body only after a certain lapse of time.

It is also truly wonderful that the moment the soul of Christ was united to His body, His Divinity also became united both to the one and the other ; and thus at the same time His body was formed and animated and the Divinity united to body and soul.

Whence it came to pass that in one and the same instant He was perfect God and perfect Man, and that the Blessed Virgin could truly and properly be called Mother of God and Mother of Man, because at the same moment she had conceived both God and Man. This was signified to her by the angel : *Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and thou shalt bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His Name Jesus ; He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High* ;² and the event only confirmed the prophecy of Isaias : *Behold, a Virgin shall bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emanuel*.³ The same thought was expressed by Elizabeth when, filled with the Holy Ghost, she recognized the mystery of the Conception, and gave utterance to these words : *Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me ?*⁴

Now, as the body of Christ was formed, as we have seen, from the most pure blood of the Immaculate Virgin, without the aid of man, and by the sole operation of the Holy Ghost,

¹ Luke i. 38.² Luke i. 31.³ Isaias vii. 14.⁴ Luke i. 43.

so also, at the moment of His conception, His soul received an overflowing fullness of the Spirit of God and a plenitude of all graces : *For God doth not give to Him* (as to other men whom He adorns with grace and holiness) *the spirit by measure*,¹ as St. John testifies ; but He poured into His soul such an abundance of grace that, *of His fullness we have all received*.²

5.—Christ cannot be called adopted Son of God. Still, though He possessed that spirit by which holy men become adopted sons of God, we may not call Him God's adopted Son ; for being the Son of God by nature, neither the title nor the grace of adoption can in any way be regarded as applicable to Him.

6.—Chief points for reflection in the first part of this Article. These, then, are the truths which seem to require to be set forth in connection with the adorable mystery of the Conception of the Son of God ; and if the faithful are to derive saving fruits therefrom, they should often call to mind and reflect in their hearts that He who assumed human flesh is God ; that He became Man in so supernatural a way that we cannot comprehend it in mind, much less explain in words ; and finally, that He willed to become man in order that we might be born again and become the children of God.

And having carefully considered these and all the other mysteries contained in this article, let them humbly and devoutly believe and adore them, without seeking to pry into them and scrutinise them with excessive curiosity, which is rarely unattended by danger.

II.—AND BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY

7.—The Nativity. Such is the second part of the Third Article, to the explanation of which the pastor should pay particular attention. For the faithful are bound to believe that, not only was Jesus Christ conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, but also that He was "born of the Virgin Mary." The joy and delight with which we should meditate on this mystery of our faith is shown by the words of the Angel who first announced the happy tidings to the world : *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the*

¹ John iii. 44.

² John i. 16.

people; ¹ as well as by the canticle sung by the heavenly host : *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will*. Then, indeed, there began to be fulfilled the magnificent promise made by God to Abraham that *in his seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed*, ² for Mary, whom we recognize and venerate as true Mother of God, because she brought forth Him who was at once God and Man, was of the line of *David the King*. ³

8.—Christ born above the ordinary course of nature. Now, if the Conception itself utterly transcends the ordinary laws of nature, His birth exhibits nothing that is not Divine. Not only this, but, wonderful beyond all thought or speech, He is born of His Mother without any lessening of her virginity. Just as years afterwards He came forth from His sepulchre though it was still closed and sealed, and just as while the doors were still shut He entered the room where His disciples were assembled ; or—not to go beyond everyday examples—just as the rays of the sun penetrate, without breaking, the hard substance of glass ; so, but in a manner much more sublime, Jesus Christ came forth from His Mother's womb, without any injury to her maternal virginity, which we rightly celebrate and praise as immaculate and perpetual. This was the work of the Holy Ghost, who so favoured the Mother in the Conception and birth of her Son that He imparted fecundity to her, while at the same time preserving her perpetual virginity.

9.—Christ called a Second Adam. —Mary a Second Eve. The Apostle sometimes calls Jesus Christ *the new Adam* and compares Him with the first Adam. For as all men die in the first, so in the second all are *made alive* ; ⁴ and as in the natural order Adam was the father of the human race, so is Christ the Author of grace and glory.

In like manner, we may compare the Virgin Mother with Eve, showing that Mary, the Second Eve, corresponds to the first Eve, as Christ, the Second Adam, has been shown to correspond to the first Adam. Thus Eve, by trusting the serpent, brought malediction and death on the human race—while Mary, confiding in the angel's words, became the instrument of Divine goodness in bringing life and benediction to men ; through Eve we are born *children of wrath* ⁵—from Mary we have received Jesus Christ, by whom we are born again the children of grace ; to Eve it was said : *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth*

¹ Luke ii. 10. ² Gen. xxii. 8. ³ Matt. i. 16. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 21. ⁵ Ephes. ii. 3.

*children*¹—Mary was exempt from this law, and, preserving intact her virginal chastity, she brought forth Jesus, the Son of God, as already observed, without experiencing any pain.

10.—**Figures and prophecies of the Conception and Nativity.** So great and so many were the mysteries comprised in this wonderful Conception and Nativity that it was but in keeping with God's providence to indicate them beforehand by many types and prophecies.

Hence the Fathers have applied to this mystery many passages of Holy Writ—those describing the gate of the sanctuary which Ezechiel saw *shut ; the stone cut out of the mountain without hands*² (as we read in Daniel), which *became a great mountain and filled the whole earth* ;³ Aaron's rod, *which alone of all the rods of the princes of Israel budded* ;⁴ the *bush which Moses saw on fire and was not consumed*.⁵

As for the history of the birth of Christ, the holy Evangelist has described it minutely, and as his words are easily accessible to the pastor we need not go into further details.

11.—**The Incarnation teaches and encourages humility.** He should, however, be at considerable pains to impress most deeply on the minds and hearts of his flock a knowledge of those mysteries which *have been written for our instruction* ; in order that, by the commemoration of so great a benefit, they may make some return to God, the Author thereof ; and on the other hand to place before their eyes, as a pattern to be imitated, that great and singular example of humility.

And, truly, what can be more useful or better adapted to bend the pride and stubbornness of our hearts than the frequent reflection that God so humbled Himself as to communicate His glory to man, and to assume man's weakness and frailty ; that God becomes man and—Supreme and Infinite Majesty as He is, *at whose nod*, as Holy Writ declares, the pillars of heaven tremble and quake for fear⁶—ministers to man ; and that He whom the angels adore in heaven is born on earth ? Remembering, then, that God does all this for our sake, what should we not do on our part to prove our obedience to Him ? How willingly and cheerfully should we not love, accept, and discharge all the offices of humility ?

Let the faithful also consider the salutary lessons that Christ teaches us in His very birth, even before He had begun to utter a word. Poor and needy was He born—a homeless stranger in

¹ Gen. iii. 16. ² Ezech. xliv. 2. ³ Dan. ii. 34. ⁴ Num. xvii. 8. ⁵ Exod. iii. 2.
⁶ Job. xxvi. 11. ; Ps. xcvi. 8.

a shed—in a lowly manger—in the depth of winter. St. Luke narrates the event : *And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered ; and she brought forth her first born Son and wrapt Him up in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn.*¹ Was it possible for the Evangelist to clothe in more lowly terms all the majesty and glory of heaven and earth? Nay, he does not even say there was no room in the inn, but that there was none for Him, who could say : *The world is Mine and the fullness thereof ;*² or, as another of the Evangelists has expressed it : *He came unto His own and His own received Him not.*³

In contemplating these mysteries the faithful should not fail to reflect that if God has deigned to assume the lowliness and frailty of our flesh, it was in order that the human race might be raised to the highest degree of dignity. This one consideration, that He who is true and perfect God became Man, abundantly declares the exalted dignity and lofty station bestowed on man by the goodness of God ; since we may now boast that the Son of God is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,⁴ a privilege not granted even to the angels, for, as the Apostle says : *Nowhere doth He take hold of the angels ; but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold.*⁵

Finally, let us take care lest to our great injury it should come to pass ; that just as at Bethlehem *there was no room for Him in the inn* in which to be born, so likewise, after He has been born in the flesh, He should find no room in our hearts in which to be spiritually born—a consummation which, in His burning desire for our salvation, He most earnestly wishes. Just, then, as by the power of the Holy Ghost and above the order of nature, He was made Man, was born, and was holy—was even holiness itself—so should we be *born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, but of God ;*⁶ should walk for ever more as new creatures *in newness of spirit ;*⁷ and should preserve that holiness and purity of soul which so much becomes men regenerated by the Spirit of God.⁸ Thus shall we in some way reflect in ourselves an image of the holy Conception and Nativity of the Son of God, which we devoutly believe, and, believing which, we acknowledge and adore. The wisdom of God *in a mystery which is hidden.*⁹

¹ Luke ii. 6.² Ps. xlix. 12.³ John i. 11.⁴ Gen. ii. 23.⁵ Heb. ii. 16.⁶ John i. 13.⁷ Gal. vi. 15.⁸ Rom. vi. 4.⁹ 1 Cor. ii. 7.

THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What is taught in the Third Article: "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"?

A. The Third Article of the Creed teaches that by the operation of the Holy Ghost the Son of God took a body and soul like ours, in the chaste womb of the Virgin Mary, and that He was born of that Virgin.

Q. Did the Father and the Son also take part in forming the body and creating the soul of Jesus Christ?

A. Yes, the whole Three Divine Persons co-operated in forming the body and in creating the soul of Jesus Christ.

Q. Why then is it simply said: "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost"?

A. It is simply said: "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost," because the Incarnation of the Son of God is a work of goodness and love, and the works of goodness and love are attributed to the Holy Ghost.

Q. In becoming man did the Son of God cease to be God?

A. No, the Son of God became man without ceasing to be God.

Q. Jesus Christ, then, is God and man at the same time?

A. Yes, the incarnate Son of God, that is, Jesus Christ, is both God and man, perfect God and perfect man.

Q. Are there, then, two natures in Jesus Christ?

A. Yes, in Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, there are two natures, the divine and the human.

Q. In Jesus Christ are there also two Persons, the divine and the human?

A. No, in the Son of God made man there is only one Person, namely, the divine.

Q. How many wills are there in Jesus Christ?

A. In Jesus Christ there are two wills, the one divine, the other human.

Q. Did Jesus Christ possess free will?

A. Yes, Jesus Christ possessed free will, but He could not do evil, since to be able to do evil is a defect, and not a perfection, of liberty.

Q. Are the Son of God and the Son of Mary one and the same Person?

A. Yes, the Son of God and the Son of Mary are one and the same Person, that is, Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Q. Is the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God?

A. Yes, the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God, because she is the Mother of Jesus Christ, who is true God.

Q. How did Mary become the Mother of Jesus Christ?

A. Mary became the Mother of Jesus Christ solely through the operation and power of the Holy Ghost.

Q. Is it of faith that Mary was always a Virgin?

A. Yes, it is of faith that the most holy Mary was always a Virgin, and she is called the Virgin of virgins.

Sixteenth Instruction on the Creed

THE INCARNATION

THE Name of Jesus, which is given in the previous article to the Son of God, has already more or less indicated the mystery of the incarnation. For the Son of God could be Jesus, i.e., our Saviour, only on the condition of taking on His own shoulders the punishment due to us, and He could not do this without clothing Himself in our passible nature and uniting it to His Divine nature, so as to be able to communicate an infinite value to the sufferings of the Humanity thus assumed.

Now, in the third article we are taught the manner in which the Son of God became man. He was, we are told, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. We shall begin with the first part of the article ; and in order to understand it as well as possible, we shall first recall to mind the Gospel narrative of this mystery.

The moment fixed from all eternity for the reconciliation of man with God being come, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by the Lord into the city of Nazareth to a Virgin called Mary, who was of the tribe of Juda, and of the royal line of David, but whose family, in the march of time, had been reduced to a humble condition. She it was who had been chosen from amongst all women as the mother of the Divine Saviour ; and in view of this destiny she had, from the very first instant of her existence, been filled with the benedictions of heaven. Though she had been consecrated to God from her tenderest years by a vow of perpetual virginity, yet she had been espoused to a man called Joseph, and this by a wise disposition of Divine Providence, in order that this just man should be the guardian and protector of her virginity, and, at the same time, the teacher and breadwinner of the Divine Infant who was to be born of her.

As Mary knelt one day rapt in meditation, the angel appeared before her, and full of respect and reverence addressed her thus : *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou amongst women.* The humble and modest virgin was troubled at the unexpected apparition and at the words that fell on her ear, and she thought within herself what could be the meaning of such a salutation. But the angel reassured her and said : *Fear not, oh Mary, for thou hast found*

grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and thou shalt bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His Name Jesus : He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High.

Such an announcement could not but prove most unexpected and cause profound surprise to a Virgin so jealous of that purity which she had already consecrated to God ; and hence she replied : *How can that be, for I know not man ?* She could have no idea of the wondrous miracle—the unique, unprecedented miracle—that was to be wrought in her, and hence she feared for her virginity. But the angel hastened to reassure her and to show her that man should have no part in her maternity ; he added : *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* As much as to say : You shall be a mother without ceasing to be a virgin ; the Holy Ghost, who is the power of God, shall miraculously form in your womb the fruit which you are to bring forth, and He shall even render your virginity still more perfect. The angel confirmed his words by relating the miracle that had taken place in her cousin, St. Elizabeth, who, six months before, had become a mother, although now so advanced in age that such an event seemed altogether impossible—a miracle which, though not for a moment to be compared with that about to be wrought in Mary, sufficed to prove that nothing was impossible to God : *Because no word shall be impossible with God.*

Then Mary, informed of the wondrous mystery, forthwith gave her consent in these terms : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord : be it done unto me according to thy word*—let God's holy will which through thee He has made known to me be accomplished. Hardly had she ceased speaking when the angel disappeared, and she from being the hand-maiden of the Lord became His Mother. In that instant the Holy Ghost formed in the chaste womb of Mary, of her virginal blood and of her substance, a tiny body to which He united a most perfect soul which He created ; and in the self-same instant the Son of God united that soul and that body to His own Divine Person, in a most intimate indivisible union ; and thus He who was God, the only Son of the Father, became also the Son of Mary—*And the Word was made flesh.*

Now in this narrative there are three things that deserve attention : (1) The election of a mother ; (2) The truth of the Conception of Jesus Christ ; and (3) The miraculous manner in which this was accomplished.

(1) The election of a mother. The Son of God could have come into the world without having to depend on a mother, but He willed

otherwise, and that for the weightiest motives : (a) To sanctify every stage of human life, especially childhood, which was so despised and ill-treated by paganism. (b) To elevate the dignity of womanhood, which, above all else, had to bear the bitter consequences of original sin. (c) To give us Mary as the second Eve, regenerated by the Second Adam—Jesus Christ.

For this purpose the Lord prepared His Mother, and having chosen her, willed that unlike the other children of Adam she should never be stained by original sin. To her soul were applied by anticipation the future merits of Jesus Christ, and she became first-born of the redeemed—not that she was redeemed from original sin, for she could not contract it, because over her soul as by a kind of dawning radiance were poured the merits of Jesus Christ ; but redeemed from the debt which as a daughter of Adam she should have contracted. Preserved from sin, she was also preserved from its chief consequences. Ignorance never darkened her understanding ; concupiscence never inclined her will to evil ; and through a privilege of God she never in her whole life committed as much as a single venial sin. Her Immaculate Conception is not, then, the reason on account of which she was chosen to be the Mother of God. God made her immaculate, because He had destined her to be His Mother.

(2) The Son of God really and truly assumed our flesh ; and just as man is conceived in his mother's womb and formed of her substance, so Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of Mary, and formed of her substance. In that lies the essence of the mystery of the Incarnation—that the Son of God—true God from all eternity together with the Father and the Holy Ghost—at the appointed time, more than four thousand years after the creation of man, took a body and soul like ours, in the womb of Mary—at once man and God, and yet but one single person, Jesus Christ. In these few words we have all the truths of faith pertaining to this mystery. But it is highly important to know them in detail.

(a) The first truth is this, that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity alone became man ; and not the First nor the Third. True, indeed, human nature could have been assumed equally by the Father, as well as by the Holy Ghost ; but this admirable union was accomplished in the person of the Son alone. And though we must not seek the why of things which depend altogether on the will of God, yet the Fathers give various reasons sufficiently sound to show that it was most fitting that this mystery should take place in the Second Person, and not in the First or Third. The first and principal reason, to which I shall limit myself, is that it was necessary to preserve a perfect correspondence between the name given to the Son, so that he who

was already Son of God could be also called the Son of Man. This could not be the case if the First or Third Person had become man ; for, in taking human nature, either of these could be called Son of Man, but not the Son of God : " It was most meet and fit," writes St. Bernard, " that He in particular should be made the Son who was already Son, so as to avoid all confusion of names."

(b) The second truth is this, that the Son of God in becoming man did not lose His Divinity nor cease to be God. When a dense cloud, coming between us and the sun, hides the sun's rays and splendour, can it be said on that account that the glorious orb has lost even the smallest part of its immense treasure of light ? In the same way the Divine Word, hiding Himself, so to say, under a cloud—under the veil of our humanity—has in no way lost or diminished His sovereign and infinite greatness, but remains as He was before—perfect God. In this mystery of love, as the great Pope St. Leo truly observes, it is true to say that our human nature has been elevated, not that the Divine nature has been abased ; just as the sun illumines the cloud, without being obscured or interiorly eclipsed by it. Under whatever aspect we consider Jesus Christ—whether as closed in His mother's womb, or as born in a stable, or as wrapped in swaddling clothes, or as liable to all our necessities, or, finally, as scourged, buffeted, crucified, and hanging on the cross, expiring amidst an ocean of suffering and insult, our faith must always make us see in Him the Son of God, born of the Father from all eternity the Lord and Master of all things, Him on whom every creature, depends.

(c) The third truth is this : If the Son of God made Man ceased not to be God, we must consequently recognize in Him two distinct natures—the Divine and the human ; the Divine, because He is God ; the human, because He is man ; true God begotten of the substance of the Father from all eternity, true man begotten in time of the substance of Mary ; perfect Man, having body and soul like ours ; having, like us, a rational soul endowed with intelligence and will ; having, too, like us a body composed of flesh, blood and bones—a body passible like ours and mortal, subject to all our infirmities—to hunger, thirst, cold, heat, fatigue—to all, in a word, except sin

These two natures in becoming intimately united in Jesus Christ were neither mixed nor confounded. Each retained its own being—the Divine nature retaining the Divine Being, the human nature the human being ; and each its own properties and perfections. Hence, just as in Jesus Christ there are two distinct natures, so in Him there are the Divine intelligence and the human intelligence ; the Divine will and the human will ; Divine operation and human operation.

(d) A fourth truth is that though in Christ there are two distinct natures, there is but one Person. The Son of the Eternal Father and the Son of Mary are not two sons, but one Son, one only Jesus Christ. And how can that be—that He who is at the same time both God and man is but one Person? Impenetrable indeed is the mystery; yet in ourselves we carry a striking image of it, in another equally inexplicable yet true and real union. Is not man composed of two substances so completely different that they seem incapable of inter-communication—soul and body? Is not the soul spiritual, the body material? Is not the soul endowed with reason, the body devoid of reason? Is not the soul immortal, the body mortal? Yet these two substances are intimately united in us—so intimately united that they form but one person, but one man—not two men nor two persons. In the same way, as the Athanasian Creed says, though humanity and Divinity are two natures infinitely apart, yet, united hypostatically in Jesus Christ, they form but one subject, one individual, one Person: “As the rational soul and the human body make but one man; so also God and Man make but one Christ.”

Now, from the fact that in Jesus Christ there is but one Person in two natures, other truths are derived pertaining to our faith:

Thus contradictory characteristics and qualities are properly attributed to Him. For we say that He is eternal and that He had a beginning; almighty and yet feeble; passible and yet impassible; equal to the Father, and yet less than the Father—all of which is true of the same Person but not of the same nature; just as it is true of us, because of the two substances of which we are composed, that we are intelligent and yet animal; incorruptible and yet corruptible; immortal and yet mortal.

But in addition to this, Jesus Christ being but one Person in two natures, it follows that in Him we attribute to God what properly pertains to man alone, and to man what pertains to God alone. Thus we say that God suffered and died, because the Person who endured suffering and death is really a Divine Person, though He suffered in His human nature alone, and not in His Divine nature, in which, as is clear, He could not suffer. As a result of His Divine Personality, the actions, sufferings and merits of the Man are the actions, sufferings and merits of a God. This is why theologians, in speaking of Jesus our Saviour, say that a single act of His will, a single tear of His, a single word even, would have sufficed for the redemption of the human race. And justly so, for they proceeded from a Divine Person and must consequently have an infinite value.

Furthermore, since Jesus Christ is but one Person in two natures, it follows that Mary must be called the true Mother of

God. For though she did not conceive nor give birth to the Divinity, yet she conceived and brought forth a Son who was at once God and Man ; and this suffices to entitle her to be rightly and truly called Mother of God, just as other mothers are really and truly the mothers of the person whom they conceive and who is composed of soul and body, though the soul, which is the principal part, is not produced by them, but is created and infused into the body directly by God.

Finally, since Jesus Christ is one Person in two natures, it follows that His humanity as well as His several parts are, in so far as they are united hypostatically to the Divinity, worthy of adoration. We must not wonder, then, if the Catholic Church proposes the Sacred Heart for our adoration. The Sacred Heart can be considered under two aspects : (1) *Materially*, as a member, a part, of His body, and united hypostatically to the Divine Word ; (2) *Mystically*, as a symbol of love. Under both aspects the Sacred Heart of Jesus is worthy of adoration. Under the first aspect, because it is a particularly noble part of that body which along with the soul receives life from the Divinity that assumed it. Under the second aspect, because the love of Jesus for the Father and for us is truly a divine love. As God, Jesus loves the Father and us with an eternal love ; as man He loves the Father with the very highest love, for more than all other men He knows the Father's perfections ; He loves us with a most tender and special love, since no one but He has laid down his life for us : *Greater love no man hath than that a man should lay down his life for his friends.*

Such, then, is an abridgment of the truths to be believed in reference to the mystery of the Incarnation—truths which clearly follow from the fact of the conception of Jesus Christ.

(3) The third thing to be observed is the miraculous manner in which the Conception of our Lord was accomplished. If the Conception of our Lord resembled ours in this that He was conceived like us in the womb of a woman and of her substance, it was on the other hand altogether different in this that He was conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and not by the instrumentality of man, as we are. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.* The Holy Ghost descending on Mary imparted to her a fecundity purely divine, and rendered her a mother without prejudicing her virginity.

Nor should we wonder at this. God can, by His omnipotence, make up for all deficiencies. Thus the earth does not now produce grain unless it is ploughed, sown, cared for, and visited in due season by sun and rain ; yet in the beginning the earth produced grain without any of these things, and by the sole power of God. It

was the same with the virginal womb of Mary, which was rendered fertile without the intervention of man,—by the sole power of God she conceived the body of Jesus Christ. Such is the glorious privilege which distinguishes the Conception of Jesus Christ from every other. As He was the Holy of Holies, even Holiness itself, He could not but be holy in His Conception, and hence it was not a man that was its author, but the Holy Ghost, the principle and source of all holiness.

Yet we must not on that account believe that the Holy Ghost is to be called Father of Jesus Christ as man. No. To be father, it was not enough to form something—it was necessary to form it of His own substance. Thus the sculptor cannot be called the father of his statue, nor the painter of his picture. Now, although the Holy Ghost formed the body of Jesus Christ, He did not do so of His own substance, but of the substance of Mary ; and, consequently, He cannot be called the Father of Jesus Christ, although Jesus Christ was conceived by His power and operation.

In any event, although we say that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, it is certain that all the Divine Persons co-operated in the accomplishment of this miracle. But as the work of the Incarnation is a most special work of infinite love, and as the Holy Ghost is the substantial Love of the Father and Son, that work is specially attributed to Him, just as we attribute the works of omnipotence to the Father, and of wisdom to the Son.

There is yet another circumstance which makes our Lord's Conception marvellous, and it is, that from the very first instant He was perfect man, if not in body at least in soul. Other children while in their mother's womb have neither intelligence nor knowledge ; but the soul of Jesus Christ from the first instant had perfect use of reason, and possessed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. From the very first instant He knew why He came into the world ; He immediately offered Himself to His Father for us ; and at the same time with full free will He subjected Himself to all the incidents of His sorrowful career, and to all the sufferings prepared for Him in the accomplishment of our salvation. *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not* (thus it is that St. Paul introduces Him to us, speaking to the Father), *but a body Thou hast fitted to Me . . . Behold I come . . . that I should do Thy will O Lord.*¹ Thus from the first moment of His existence Jesus Christ commenced to exercise for us the office of Saviour. He commenced to suffer by remaining enclosed for nine months within the narrow cell of His mother's womb

¹Heb. x. 5.

—a consideration that should form a powerful motive for consecrating every moment of our lives to Him, without the smallest exception, if we wish to avoid being ungrateful and unmindful.

With regard to the lessons to be learned from all this, we shall see what they are at a more opportune time, when we come to explain the other mysteries of humiliation of which the Creed makes mention, and which are derived from the Incarnation as from their source.

I shall merely observe here that after Jesus Christ our Saviour, we should regard Mary as our firmest support, our greatest consolation, and our surest refuge in adversity.

Let us, then, turn affectionately to her, begging her to have compassion on us who have been conceived in sin, who are miserably inclined to sin, who fall repeatedly into sin, who tranquilly continue in sin. The first fall was our misfortune ; our own sins are at once our misfortune and our fault ; but perseverance in sin is our fault and nothing but our fault—it is blindness, malice, hardness of heart.

Let us beseech her, then, to obtain us the light necessary to understand thoroughly the danger of our condition ; the will and the strength to escape it by weeping sincerely over our sins ; speedy flight in the future from every sin, great and small ; perseverance and fortitude in doing good. This prayer, which we should address to her now and always, will certainly not be in vain if we on our side only do our part, and make the efforts which God demands of us.

Seventeenth Instruction on the Creed

THE NATIVITY

THE great and ineffable mystery of the Incarnation, which, from all eternity, had been in the hidden designs of God, and had been secretly accomplished in the virgin womb of Mary, was at length visibly manifested to the world. After the usual period of nine months, Jesus Christ was born, to all appearance a man, in no way different from other men, yet in reality a Man-God, concealing the Divinity under the veil of His humanity.

The Nativity of our Lord took place, as is commonly believed, at midnight on the 25th of December, at Bethlehem, a small town of Judea. Mary had journeyed thither with St. Joseph; the hour of her delivery was at hand; unable to find in the town an asylum in which to rest, she had to seek shelter outside the village; and accordingly she took refuge in a rude shed, where she gave birth to the Saviour of the world.

Now, in this we should first of all notice the place of the Nativity, it being one of the special circumstances that were to attend the birth of the Messiah, as had been clearly foretold by the Prophets. Although Mary and Joseph lived at Nazareth, Jesus nevertheless was to be born at Bethlehem, according to the clear prediction of the Prophet Micheas: *And thou Bethlehem, land of Juda, art not the least amongst the princes of Juda; for from thee shall come forth a Leader who shall rule My people Israel.* For this prophecy to be fulfilled it was necessary, then, that Mary and Joseph should go to Bethlehem, and that they should do so about the time when the birth of her divine Son was near at hand. An occasion was afforded by the edict of the Emperor, in obedience to which all his subjects had to have themselves registered in the city or town from which they derived their origin; and as Mary and Joseph derived theirs from Bethlehem, they journeyed thither in obedience to the Emperor's decree. Observe how God knew how to make use of the monarch's vanity to accomplish the Scriptures, and to afford us a sure token of the Incarnation of His divine Son, by having Him born in the very place foretold in the prophecy of Micheas.

Entering at once into the heart of this mystery, our instruction

thereon may be limited to the solution of two difficulties regarding the way God has chosen for His entrance into the world.

I. The Son of God having resolved to redeem man, it was fitting that the redemption should be accomplished in that very nature which He wished to redeem. Consequently He had to become man, since it was man He was about to redeem. But why humiliate Himself and abase Himself to such an extent as to become a tiny infant? Could He not assume a fully formed and perfect body, similar to that of Adam at the moment of creation? Such is the first difficulty that presents itself.

Undoubtedly the Son of God could have become Man in this way; but it is equally true that the way He actually chose—to be born of a woman like other men—was an admirable example of His wisdom and goodness. And, first of His wisdom, for three reasons:

(a) To afford us absolute certainty that He really and truly assumed our human nature. Amongst the many heretics who, in various ways, attacked the mystery of the Incarnation, there were some who pretended and taught that in Jesus Christ there was merely an apparent, an imaginary body, like to that which angels had sometimes assumed during their apparitions. Hence they asserted that Jesus Christ was not a real man, but rather a fictitious personage, and consequently that all the mysteries which He wrought were nothing more than a deception or an illusion. Now an error of this kind would possess far greater plausibility and support if Jesus Christ had suddenly appeared on the earth as a fully-formed man. But as He willed to follow in all things the common condition—to be conceived like other men in the womb of a woman, to grow up and develop, gradually, like others—it would be madness to doubt of the reality of His flesh.

(b) To enoble all human nature, in one sex as well as in the other. As the ruin of the human race had proceeded from a man and a woman, so both one and the other must co-operate in the work of redemption. Now this could not be done if Jesus Christ had come into the world in any other manner than by way of temporal generation. Accordingly, He took on Himself the male sex as being the nobler, but at the same time, in being born of a woman, He associated the female sex in that work, and thus both sexes co-operated in repairing the injury wrought by Adam and Eve.

(c) For the special exaltation of Mary, as well as for our own greater advantage. Had not Jesus Christ taken a body in the womb of Mary she would not be the Mother of God, and we should not have had the Mother of God for our Mother. It was, then, a sublime design

of divine wisdom to have chosen from amongst all the possible ways of becoming man, this special one of being born of a woman.

In addition to this, it was an admirable example of singular goodness, since He rendered Himself more accessible to us, afforded us a more powerful motive for loving Him, and made Himself surer of our hearts; He willed to be born, says St. Bernard, because He wished to be loved. A God made Man is assuredly something altogether wonderful; it is, as St. Paul calls it, a mystery of annihilation: *He emptied Himself*—so great is the difference between the two terms, God and man! But an infant God, a God wrapped up in swaddling clothes, a God poor and weeping—behold a still deeper degree of humiliation, a more touching proof of tender love! What can be imagined more lovable, more tender, or more calculated to excite affection and confidence than this? His infantile weakness, His couch of straw, His cradle, His swaddling clothes, and especially His tears and cries—all here stimulates faith and love. Hence Isaias, contemplating this mystery with prophetic eye, could not refrain from exclaiming with loving enthusiasm: *A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us.* Let us ponder well on these significant words, and assuredly we shall neither be as cold nor as indifferent as we are.

II. But, some one may say, even though Christ for these reasons did will to be born of a woman, He should at least have chosen it in a manner more fitting and less unworthy of His infinite greatness. A noble birth would have won Him greater veneration and respect; whereas a God born in a stable, and sleeping on hay in the midst of beasts of burthen, is an idea hard to reconcile with our sense of the fitness of things. This is the second difficulty which, however, will be easily solved if we but consider the loving end for which He came down from heaven to earth.

Can we for a moment imagine that He has come among us to make a brilliant appearance? Granted that an illustrious and glorious birth would be more befitting His greatness; would it be more befitting our needs? He was born to be our Saviour; and as Saviour it was fitting that He should be born thus, since as Saviour He had not only to pay the penalties due to our sins, but also to free us from the blindness of error, and, by His example, to teach us the way of salvation. He suffers for us, but He suffers in such a way as to teach us striking lessons. His sufferings are, in a sense, instructions for us; and this is what the Apostle wishes to indicate when he defines this mystery as the goodness and mercy of God appearing in our midst to open our eyes: *The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared.*¹

¹ Titus iii. 4.

Let us now examine this mystery still more closely. By the manner of His birth He specially aimed at combating that triple concupiscence which causes the ruin and the damnation of many a soul, that is to say, excessive love of riches, pleasures and honours : *All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.*¹ Look around you, and you will find that in their pursuits, cares and anxieties the majority of men have no other aim than that of enriching themselves, elevating themselves, and enjoying themselves. And are we, then, to criticize in Jesus Christ a manner of birth that tends to deliver us from this fatal spell which closes our eyes to our true goal—God and our eternal salvation ? Nay, does not the wisdom of God shine out clearly here also ?—a wisdom full of strength for Himself, but of condescension for us.

1. Hence, to destroy in us the love of riches He was born poor, but His poverty was one of choice, and chosen, so to say, with jealous care. Let us carefully note the circumstances, which are all worthy of serious reflection. To be born of Mary, He awaited a time when her family had fallen from its ancient splendour and was reduced to poverty, and when she had no other means of support than the sweat of Joseph's brow in the modest trade of carpenter. But this was not yet enough for the designs of God. If Jesus Christ had been born at Nazareth, in the house of Joseph, poor though it was, it could at least have afforded some comfort, and His birth would not have been so cheerless and poor. But, as it was to be one of unexampled poverty, God made use of Cæsar's edict to oblige Mary and Joseph to leave their home and repair to Bethlehem ; to attract to that town such a crowd of strangers that it was impossible to find room in the public inns ; furthermore, that this circumstance should coincide with the hour of Mary's delivery : *Her days were accomplished that she should be delivered ;* and finally, that Mary, constrained to seek shelter in an abandoned shed, the resting-place of animals, should there give birth to her divine Son, whom she had to lay in the manger, covering Him in swaddling clothes as best she could. Now, seeing all these circumstances, which were willed and designed by God, what birth was ever surrounded by a poverty comparable to this ? Ah, well ! it was necessary to pluck out of our hearts that unbridled love of riches which St. Paul calls the root of all evil, and to teach us, if we are rich, to esteem our riches only in so far as they may serve as a source of merit by using them well ; and if we are poor, to esteem and love a poverty consecrated by God Himself, or if we are not capable of such heroic virtue, at least not to complain of it, and to bear it patiently for the love of that God, who, of His own free will, became poor for love of us : *The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared.*

¹ John i. 16.

2. To destroy in us the love of pleasure, He gives us from His very birth an example of the sorest privations. How many and how great were the pains and sorrows that attended such a birth ? No bed, no covering, no fire—coarse straw, exposure to air, the biting stings of cold, severe mid-winter on a frosty night ! And to withstand these sufferings His Divinity was of no avail, since it is an article of faith that, in becoming man, Jesus Christ assumed all our weaknesses and infirmities, with not one exception but sin. Nay, these sufferings were felt all the more by Him, inasmuch as in Him, unlike other children, they were accompanied by perfect knowledge, and consequently by greater pain. But all this was necessary to teach us not only to refrain from guilty pleasures and sinful deeds, but also cheerfully to embrace penance, mortification and crosses : *The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us.*

3. Finally, to destroy in us the love of honours, He willed to be born of a poor woman, espoused to a humble artisan, and to have no other cradle than a manger, and no other retinue than animals. And, in truth, all this was not too much to humble our pride and vanity, and to teach us to appreciate humility, meekness, lowliness : *The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us.* In a word, Jesus Christ, from the first moment of His birth, opened a high school to instruct us and disabuse us, and commenced by His deeds to teach us what later on He was to preach in words : *He began to do and to teach.* And if, after such a noble example of poverty, mortification and humility, the world runs so eagerly and blindly after riches, pleasures and honours, what would it have been if Jesus Christ had appeared in any other guise—in a state of grandeur, splendour and pomp—thus authorizing, by His example, our errors and vicious tendencies ? But no ; His example, totally opposed as it is to our maxims and our customs, will ever rise up against us in judgment and condemnation.

So far so well, you may say ; but how can we recognize the true Son of God in an infant who is born in the midst of obscurity and poverty ; who needs to be fed, assisted, helped ; who suffers, weeps, speaks not ; and who differs from other infants only in this, that His misery is more extreme than theirs ? And if the Jews, seeing Him in this condition, refused to recognize Him as the expected Saviour, are they not deserving of excuse and compassion ?

No ; they are not excusable, because, though His birth was abject and miserable, it was nevertheless accompanied by many wondrous circumstances that heralded in that Infant an extraordinary per-

sonage, the true Son of God: for instance, the adoration rendered to Him at the moment of His birth by the Angels, who at once made it known to the shepherds; the heavenly light that shone that night; the angelic hymns heard resounding in the air; the wonderful star that led the Magi from afar. Behold, then, in the birth of Christ, a wonderful intermingling of lowliness and grandeur, of weakness and power, perfectly calculated to make us recognize in the Son of Mary the true Son of God.

And not only the birth, but the whole life of Jesus Christ down to His ignominious death on the Cross, was marked by these two opposite characteristics of humiliation and grandeur—humiliation, because He was man and had come to save us; grandeur, because at the same time He was always true God. Such a mingling of darkness and light entered into the designs of God, in order that on the one hand our faith in Him should be meritorious, and, on the other hand, that we should be inexcusable if we refused to believe in Him.

Confining ourselves, however, to the Nativity, one of the circumstances that distinguish the birth of Christ from every other birth is, that He was born of a woman who was also a virgin—by being born of a woman, He showed us that He was man; by being born of a virgin, He showed He was God. It is a miracle—a miracle not witnessed before, and never to be witnessed again—a miracle redounding to the honour of both Son and Mother. It was but fitting that He should be Son of a virgin, so that His conception should be exempt from stain, not only because of His personal union with the Divinity, but also because of His generation; it was but fitting that He should be Son of a virgin, in order that, as He is different from all other men and superior to all other men in His quality of Man-God, so also the manner of His conception and birth should be different from that of other men and superior to that of other men. He proved Himself man by being born of a woman, and God by being born of a virgin.

It is true that this glorious prerogative was hidden under the veil of the marriage-contract between Mary and Joseph; but the Jews were not unacquainted with the glorious words prophetically uttered by Isaias: *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son*. This prophecy, which was well known to them, along with other prophecies which were visibly fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and the miracles witnessed at His birth, should have made them recognize in Mary the virgin-mother foretold by Isaias, and in her Son the promised and expected Messiah. They were, then, inexcusable in refusing to recognize Him for what He was.

But let us leave them to their blindness, and let us, before concluding, make a final reflection on another truth contained in this

article: From the title of virgin, which it gives to Mary, and from various other proofs which need not be recounted here, all the Fathers of the Church have recognized, as an article of faith, the perpetual and inviolable virginity of Mary,—a truth which we also profess by calling her a virgin “before, during, and after her delivery.”

Before her delivery, since she conceived Jesus Christ without any prejudice to her virginal purity—without the co-operation of any creature—solely by the power and operation of the Holy Ghost.

In her delivery, since Jesus Christ came forth from her most chaste womb without injuring her integrity, leaving His Mother intact, just as, to use the expression of St. Augustine, a ray of light passes through glass without breaking or staining it; nay, even as light, passing through glass, renders it still more beautiful and more brilliant, so also Jesus Christ, coming forth from the womb of Mary, but sanctified her more and more. Hence her delivery was exempt from all stain, from all pain, and from all the mournful consequences that accompany the delivery of other women; and therefore it was that she was able to assist her Son the moment He was born, and to render Him in person all the services of which He had need.

After her delivery, since she ever remained virgin down to the hour of her death; and hence it is that she is compared by the Fathers to that mysterious door of the sanctuary, seen by Ezechiel, through which the Lord alone entered, and which always remained closed: *This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut.*

Let us give glory to Mary, who alone, of all women, was able to combine the gift of virginity with that of maternity, a maternity such as raised her to the sublime and divine rank of Mother of God. Let us give glory to the Blessed Fruit of her womb, Jesus Christ, and let us love and imitate, as far as possible, the examples of detachment which He has given us in His birth, Jesus and Mary are two great names that can never be separated. Jesus is our sweet Redeemer and Mary our loving co-redemptrix. These two should be the object of our devotion during life, our refuge in death, our joy in Paradise. Let us never separate them, then, but let us ever bear them engraven in our hearts; and if we but do this, we shall have derived no small fruit from this instruction.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE : WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND
BURIED

1.—On frequent explanation of this article. WHEN the Apostle declares that He *knows nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified*¹ he lets us see how necessary is a knowledge of this article, and how industriously the pastor should exhort his flock to stir up in their minds the frequent remembrance of the Passion of our Saviour. The pastor, then, will employ the greatest care and zeal in furnishing a thorough explanation of this subject, in order that the faithful may be stirred up by the memory of this great mercy, and may be led to recognize and give themselves entirely to the contemplation of the goodness and love of God for us.

I.—SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE : WAS CRUCIFIED

2.—Christ suffered in soul as well as in body. In the first part of this article—(the second shall be considered later on)—faith proposes to our belief that during the time when Pontius Pilate, by authority of Tiberius Cæsar, was Governor of Judea, Christ our Lord was crucified. For He was taken prisoner, was mocked, outraged, tortured, and finally nailed to a Cross.

It cannot be doubted that His soul, in its inferior parts, was sensible to these torments. The very fact that He really and truly assumed human nature necessarily implies that even in His soul He experienced the keenest pain. Nay, He Himself has said : *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*² For though His human nature found itself united to His divine Person, still, notwithstanding that union, He felt the bitterness of His Passion as acutely as if no such union existed and the reason is,

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

² Matt. xxvi. 38.

that in the one Person of Jesus Christ, the properties and qualities of the two natures—the human and the divine—were preserved ; and hence, that which in Him was passible and mortal remained passible and mortal, while that which was impassible and immortal, that is to say, the Divine Nature, retained its own properties.

3.—Time of the Passion. Seeing that it is so carefully recorded here that Jesus Christ suffered during the time when Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judea, the pastor will point out this has been done in order that the knowledge of an event, so important and so necessary to man, might be rendered more easily ascertainable and better known to all by the fact that the exact time of its accomplishment was precisely fixed, as is done by the Apostle Paul¹; and as well as this because these words go to show that our Saviour's prediction was really verified: *They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, to be mocked and scourged and crucified.*²

4.—Death on the Cross. The fact that He suffered death precisely on the wood of the Cross, must also be attributed to a particular counsel of God, which decreed that " Life should return by the way whence death had arisen." The serpent, who had triumphed over our first parents by the fruit of a tree, was, in his turn, vanquished by Christ on the tree of the Cross.

Many other reasons which the Fathers have discussed in detail, might be adduced to show that it was fit and meet that our Redeemer should suffer death on the Cross rather than in any other way. But, as the pastor will show, it is enough for the faithful to believe that this kind of death was chosen by our Saviour because it appeared better adapted and more appropriate to the redemption of the human race ; for there certainly could be none more ignominious and humiliating. Not only amongst the Gentiles was the punishment of the Cross held accursed and full of shame and infamy, but even in the law of Moses the sentence ran: *Accursed is he who hangeth on a tree.*³

5.—The story of the Passion to be frequently narrated. Furthermore, the pastor will not omit to recount the historical narrative connected with this article, which has been so carefully set forth by the Evangelists ; so that the faithful may be acquainted with at least the principal points

¹ Tim. vi. 13.² Matt. xx. 19.³ Deut. xxi. 23 ; Gal. iii. 13.

of this mystery, that is to say, such as seem more necessary to confirm and establish the truth of our faith. For it is on this article, as on their foundation, that the Christian faith and religion rest; and if this truth be firmly established, all the rest is secure. In truth, if one thing more than another presents difficulty to the mind and understanding of man, assuredly it is the mystery of the Cross, which, beyond all doubt, may be considered the most difficult of all, so much so that only with great difficulty can we grasp the fact that our salvation depends on the Cross, and on Him who, for us men, was nailed thereon. In this, however, as the Apostle teaches, we may well admire the wonderful providence of God, for, *seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*¹ We need not wonder, then, that the Prophets, previous to the Incarnation, and the Apostles, after the death and resurrection of Christ, laboured so strenuously to prove to mankind that He was the Redeemer of the world, as well as to lead men to acknowledge the dominion of the Crucified, and the obedience due to Him.

Hence, seeing that there was nothing so far above the reach of human reason as the mystery of the Cross, from the very day of the Fall the Lord never ceased to signify by figures and prophetic oracles the death His Son was to undergo.

Just to mention a few of these figures: Abel, slain by the envy of his brother; next the sacrifice of Isaac; then the lamb immolated by the Jews on their going forth out of Egypt; the brazen serpent raised aloft by Moses in the desert—all these were so many figures representing the Passion and Death of Christ our Lord.

As for Prophets: it is too well known to be repeated here how many there were who foretold the event. Omitting David² who, in his psalms, has included the principal mysteries of our Redemption, the prophecies of Isaiah are so clear and explicit beyond all others that it might well be thought that he was relating events already accomplished rather than foretelling what had yet to come to pass.

II.—DEAD AND BURIED

6.—General meaning of these words. The pastor will show that the words “dead and buried,” propose to our belief that Jesus Christ, after having been crucified, really died and was buried. Nor is it without good reason that this

¹ 1 Cor. i. 21.

² Ps. ii., xx., lxxviii. and cix.

truth is proposed to the faithful as a separate article of belief, since some have been found to deny that He really died on the Cross. Rightly, then, did the Apostles, in opposition to this error, determine to set forth the true teaching of our faith; and, as all the Evangelists agree in stating that *Jesus yielded up the ghost*,¹ not the smallest room is left for questioning the truth of this article.

Moreover, as Christ was true and perfect man, He could also truly die; and man dies when his soul quits his body. Hence, when we say that Jesus Christ died, we mean thereby that His soul was separated from His body. In saying this, however, we do not imply that His Divinity was also separated from His body—nay, on the contrary, we firmly believe and confess that, on His soul being separated from His body, His Divinity remained always united both to His body in the sepulchre and to His soul in hell.

Well did it become the Son of God to die *that through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil; and might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to servitude.*²

7.—Christ died of
His own free
will.

It was our Lord's peculiar privilege to have died precisely when He Himself had decreed to die, and, moreover, to have died not so much through the violence of others as by His own free will. Not only did He Himself ordain His death, but also the very place and time in which He was to die. Thus Isaias had foretold of Him: *He was offered because it was His own will*,³ while He Himself, before His Passion, had declared: *I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself; and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.*⁴ As regards the time and place of His death, He said, when Herod sought His life: *Go and tell that fox: behold I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am consummated. Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow and the day following, because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*⁵

It was not, then, in spite of Himself nor by constraint, but of His own free will, that He offered Himself and that, advancing to meet His enemies, He said, *I am He.*⁶ And it was equally of His own free will that He underwent all the torments with which He was so unjustly and cruelly overwhelmed.

¹ Matt. xxviii. 50; Mark xv. 37; John xix. 30.

³ Is. liii. 7.

⁴ John x. 17.

⁵ Luke xiii. 32.

² Heb. ii. 14.

⁶ John xviii. 5.

In meditating on His sufferings and torments, nothing is better calculated to stir our very inmost soul than the foregoing consideration. Were a man to endure all kinds of suffering for us simply because he could not avoid it, and not of his own free will, we should hardly set a very high value on the favour. But if on our account alone he were freely to suffer death when he might easily have avoided it, this surely would be so great a boon that it could not but deprive even the most grateful heart, not only of the power of returning, but even of feeling, due thanks. Bearing this in mind, we shall be able to form some idea of the surpassing and supreme love of Jesus Christ, and of His divine and boundless claims on our gratitude.

8.—Christ really buried. WE also confess that Christ was buried; but this clause is not inserted on account of any difficulty that is not implied in what has been already explained, regarding His death. Once we believe that Christ really died, it is not difficult to convince ourselves that He was buried. But the word was added, in the first place, to leave less room for doubt regarding His death, since the very strongest proof of a man's death is the fact that his body has been buried; and secondly, in order that the miracle of His resurrection may be rendered more manifest and authentic.

Nor is it our belief that Christ's body alone was buried; nay, what is here specially proposed for our belief by these words is that God was buried, just as we most truly say, in accordance with the rule of Catholic Faith, that God died, or that God was born of a Virgin; for, as the Divinity of Jesus Christ was never separated from His body, which was laid to rest in the grave, we rightly confess that God was buried.

9.—Circumstances of Christ's death and burial. As to the manner and place of His burial, the Gospel narratives will be quite sufficient for the pastor. Two points, however, deserve special notice—the first, that Christ's body was exempt from all corruption in the sepulchre, as the Prophet had foretold: *Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption*;¹ and the second, which applies to every part of this article, is this, that burial as well as the Passion and Death, apply to Christ not as God but as Man. To suffer and to die are incidental to human nature only; yet they are also here attributed to God, since it is clear that they may be properly said of that Person, who was at once perfect God and perfect Man.

¹ Ps. xv. 10.

III.—CAUSES OF CHRIST'S DEATH

10.—Considerations on the Passion:—(a) Dignity of the Sufferer.

These things having been explained, the pastor will proceed to dwell on various considerations in connexion with the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, so as to enable the faithful, if not to comprehend, at least to meditate on, the immensity of this wonderful mystery.

And first of all he should tell them who it is that endures all these sufferings. It is One whose dignity is such that we can neither explain nor comprehend it. It is He who, as St. John says, is the *Word which was with God*.¹ It is He whom the Apostle, in noble words, describes as being one *whom God hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the world; who being the splendour of His glory and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high*.² In a word, He who suffered for us is Jesus Christ, God and Man. It is the Creator who suffers for His creatures, the Master for His servants; it is He by whom angels, men, the heavens, and all the elements were created—He, of whom, and by whom, and in whom, are all things.³

No wonder, then, that while He was agonizing under so many sufferings and torments, the whole fabric of the universe was convulsed, and that, in the words of Holy Writ: *The earth quaked, and the rocks were rent*,⁴ and that *there was darkness over all the earth, and the sun was darkened*.⁵

Now, if even mute and inanimate things sympathised with their Creator, let the faithful weigh well the tears of sorrow with which they—the *living stones*⁶ of the spiritual fabric—should manifest their grief.

11.—(b) Second consideration: Sin a cause of the Passion.

He will now explain the causes of the Passion, so as to bring into still clearer relief the greatness and intensity of the love of God for us. Now, should anyone seek to know the motive that led the Son of God to undergo His most bitter Passion, he will find that, besides the guilt we inherit from our first parents, the chief cause lies in the crimes and sins which men have committed from the beginning of the world down to the present day, as well as those they shall commit to the end of time. The end which the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, had in His Passion and Death,

¹ John i. 1.

⁵ Luke xxiii. 44.

² Heb. i. 2.

⁶ 1 Peter ii. 5.

³ Rom. xi. 36.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 51.

was to atone for and efface the sins of every age, and offer to His Father for these sins a satisfaction abundant and complete.

To enhance the weight of this consideration it should be borne in mind, that Christ not only suffered for sinners, but even for those who were the authors and ministers of all the torments He had to endure, as St. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Hebrews: *Think diligently upon Him who endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds.*¹

All who frequently fall into sin must be considered guilty of this crime; for as our sins consigned our Lord to the punishment of the Cross, assuredly they who wallow in crime and sin *crucify again*, as far as in them lies, *the son of God, and make a mockery of Him.*²

This wickedness may well seem more heinous in us than it was in the Jews; for, as the Apostle testifies, *had they known it, they never would have crucified the Lord of Glory.*³ While we at one and the same time profess to know Him, and yet deny Him by our deeds, and thereby in some sort lay violent hands upon Him.

12.—Third consideration (c) He was handed over to death by the Father and by Himself. Finally, Sacred Scripture also testifies that Christ our Lord was delivered over to death by the Father and by Himself. The Prophet Isaias makes God the Father say: *For the wickedness of My people have I struck Him;*⁴ and a little before, the same Prophet, filled with the spirit of God, seeing the Lord covered with sores and wounds, cried out: *All we like sheep have gone astray; everyone hath turned aside into his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.*⁵ Speaking of the Son he writes: *If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed.*⁶ This the Apostle has expressed in still more decisive words, when, desirous of drawing attention to the confidence we should have in the boundless mercy of God, he says: *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things.*⁷

IV.—BITTERNESS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

13.—Christ suffered in both mind and body. The pastor will next show how great was the bitterness of Christ's Passion; though, at the same time, if we only bear in mind that our Lord's *sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon*

¹ Heb. xii. 3.

² Heb. vi. 6.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 8.

⁴ Is. liii. 8.

⁵ Is. liii. 6.

⁶ Is. liii. 10.

⁷ Rom. viii. 32

the ground,¹ in simple anticipation of the torments and sufferings that awaited Him, each one will easily understand that it would be impossible to add anything to His sorrows; for if the bare thought of the torments that hung over Him was as bitter as the sweat of blood proclaimed it to be, what are we to think of the reality? Certain it is, then, that Christ our Lord endured the most intense suffering, both in mind and body.

First of all, there was not one part of His body that did not experience the most excruciating torments—His feet and hands were fastened with nails to the Cross; His head pierced with thorns, and smitten with a reed; His face defiled with spittle and buffeted with blows; and His whole body covered with stripes.

Men, too, of every sort and condition *met together against the Lord and against His Christ* ²—Gentiles and Jews were equally the instigators, the authors, and the ministers of His Passion: Judas betrayed Him; Peter denied Him; His other disciples abandoned Him.

As He hangs on the Cross, which shall we most deplore—the bitterness of His sorrow, the ignominy of His punishment, or both together? Assuredly no death more shameful, none more bitter, could ever be contrived—a death usually reserved for great and atrocious malefactors, the slowness of which but aggravated the exquisite pain and torture.

His agony was increased by the very constitution and frame of His body. Formed, as it was, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that body was much more perfect and finely tempered than is possible for the bodies of other men to be; and hence was more keenly sensitive to pain, and felt more intensely the torture He had to bear.

As for His inner anguish of soul, no one could doubt that in Him it was extreme. When the saints had to bear torments and tortures they were not left without interior comfort from on high, strengthening and enabling them to bear patiently the violence of their sufferings—nay, many of them, even in the midst of their sufferings, were transported with inward joy: *I rejoice in my sufferings for you*, says the Apostle, *and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church*; ³ and elsewhere he says: *I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations.*⁴ But Christ our Lord tempered the chalice of His most bitter Passion with no admixture of sweetness ⁵—He permitted the

¹ Luke xxii. 44.² Ps. ii. 2.³ Col. i. 24.⁴ 2^d Cor. vii. 4.⁵ Matt. xxi. 39; Ps. lviii. 21; Luke xxii. 44.

human nature, which He had assumed, to suffer every species of torment, just as if He was simply man, and not God at all.

V.—FRUIT OF CHRIST'S DEATH

14.—Advantages
and blessings
of Christ's
Passion.

It only remains now for the pastor to indicate accurately the blessings and advantages our Saviour's Passion has procured us :

(a) In the first place, then, the Passion of our Lord spelt our deliverance from sin, as we read in St. John : *He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,*¹ and, according to the Apostle, *He hath quickened you together with Him, forgiving you all offences, blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was against us, which was contrary to us, and the same He took out of the way, fastening it to the Cross.*²

(b) In the next place, He has snatched us from the tyranny of the devil. Our Lord Himself says : *Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out ; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all things to Myself.*³

(c) Thirdly, He has paid the penalty due to our sins.

(d) Fourthly, as no more acceptable and pleasing sacrifice, could be offered to God, He has reconciled us to His Father appeased Him and made Him look favourably on us.⁴

(e) Finally, by taking away our sins he has opened to us the way to heaven, which had been closed by the common sin of mankind, as the Apostle explains : *Having, therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the sanctuary, by the blood of Christ.*⁵

Nor is the Old Law without trace of types and figures of this mystery. Thus those who were forbidden to return to their country before the death of the High Priest, typified that no one, no matter how good and holy had been his life, could enter the heavenly country until the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ had died, and by His death had once opened the gates of heaven to all who, cleansed by the sacraments, and endowed with faith, hope and charity, are made partakers of His Passion.

15.—Reason of
the efficacy of
the Passion of
Christ.

The pastor will explain that it is from the Passion of our Lord that all these surpassing gifts of God have come to us.

And, first, because the satisfaction which in this wonderful manner Jesus Christ made to His Father for

¹ Apoc. i. 5. ² Col. ii. 13. ³ John xii. 31. ⁴ Rom. v. 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 8. ⁵ Heb. x. 10.

our sins, is complete and perfect in every respect. Not alone was the price He paid for us adequate and equal to our debt, but infinitely above it.

In the next place, it was a sacrifice most acceptable to God, and, offered as it was by the Son on the altar of the Cross, completely appeased the Father's anger and indignation—an argument used by the Apostle when he says: *Christ loved us and delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness.*¹

And, thirdly, this is the redemption referred to by the Prince of the Apostles, when he says: *You were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver, from your vain conversations of the traditions of your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb unspotted and undefiled;*² while the Apostle teaches: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*³

In addition to these immense blessings, we have also acquired that wonderful one of having in the Passion alone the most shining examples of every virtue—for He manifested His patience, humility, tenderest love, meekness, obedience, and unshaken strength of soul, not only in bearing suffering for justice' sake but even in facing death itself—so much so that we can say that our Saviour, in that one day of His Passion, truly exemplified in His own Person every single precept He had taught during the whole time of His public ministry.

Thus far, briefly, concerning the saving Passion and Death of Christ our Lord: God grant that these mysteries be ever present to our minds, and that we may learn to suffer, die and be buried with our Lord; so that, from henceforth, casting off every stain of sin, and rising with Him to newness of life, we may at length, through His grace and mercy, be found worthy to be made partakers in the glory of His heavenly kingdom.

¹ Eph. v. 2.

² 1 Peter i. 8.

³ Gal. iii. 13.

THE FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught in the Fourth Article: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate: was crucified, dead, and buried" ?

A. The Fourth Article of the Creed teaches us that to redeem the world by His Precious Blood, Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Judea, died on the tree of the Cross, and on being taken down therefrom was buried.

Q. What does the word *suffered* denote ?

A. The word *suffered* denotes all the pains endured by Jesus Christ during His Passion.

Q. Did Jesus Christ suffer as God or as man ?

A. Jesus Christ suffered as man alone ; as God He could neither suffer nor die.

Q. What class of punishment was that of the Cross ?

A. The punishment of the Cross in those days was the cruellest and the most ignominious of all punishments.

Q. Who was it that condemned Jesus Christ to be crucified ?

A. He who condemned Jesus Christ to be crucified was Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Judea who, though recognizing His innocence, cravenly yielded to the threats of the people of Jerusalem.

Q. Could not Jesus Christ have freed Himself from the hands of Pilate and the Jews ?

A. Yes, Jesus Christ could have freed Himself from the hands of Pilate and the Jews. but knowing

it was His eternal Father's will that He should suffer and die for our salvation, He voluntarily submitted ; nay, He Himself went forth to meet His enemies and freely permitted Himself to be taken and led to death.

Q. Where was Jesus Christ crucified ?

A. Jesus Christ was crucified on Mount Calvary.

Q. What did Jesus Christ do while on the Cross ?

A. On the Cross Jesus Christ prayed for His enemies ; gave His own Most Blessed Mother as a Mother to St. John, and, in his person, to all of us ; offered up His death in sacrifice ; and satisfied the justice of God for the sins of men.

Q. Would it not have been enough for an Angel to come and make satisfaction for us ?

A. No, it would not have been enough for an Angel to come and make satisfaction for us, because the offence given to God by sin was, in a certain sense, infinite, and to satisfy for it a person possessing infinite merit was required.

Q. To satisfy divine justice, was it necessary that Jesus Christ should be both God and man ?

A. Yes ; to be able to suffer and die it was necessary that Jesus Christ should be man ; while for His sufferings to be of infinite value it was necessary that He should be God.

Q. Why was it necessary that the merits of Jesus Christ should be of infinite value ?

A. It was necessary that the merits of Jesus Christ should be of infinite value, because God's Majesty, which had been offended by sin, is infinite.

Q. Was it necessary for Jesus Christ to suffer as much as He actually did ?

A. No, it was not absolutely necessary for Jesus Christ to suffer as much as He did, because each of His acts being of infinite value, the least of His sufferings would have sufficed for our redemption.

Q. Why, then, did Jesus suffer so much ?

A. Jesus Christ suffered so much in order to satisfy divine justice all the more abundantly ; to display His love for us still more ; and to inspire us with the deepest horror of sin.

Q. Did anything remarkable happen at the death of Jesus Christ ?

A. Yes, at the death of Jesus Christ, the sun was darkened, the earth trembled, graves opened and many of the dead arose.

Q. Where was the Body of Jesus Christ buried ?

A. The Body of Jesus Christ was buried in a new grave, hewn out of a rock, on the mount not far from where He had been crucified.

Q. Was the Divinity separated from the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ by His death ?

A. The Divinity was separated from neither the Body nor the Soul of Christ in death ;—only the Soul was separated from the Body.

Q. For whom did Jesus Christ die ?

A. Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all men, and made satisfaction for all.

Q. If Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all men, why are not all men saved ?

A. Jesus Christ died for all, but not all are saved, because not all will acknowledge Him ; all do not observe His Law ; all do not avail themselves of the means of salvation He has left us.

Q. To be saved is it enough that Jesus Christ has died for us ?

A. No, it is not enough for our salvation that Jesus Christ has died for us ; it is also necessary that the fruits of His Passion and death be applied to each one of us, which is accomplished especially by means of the Sacraments instituted for this end by Jesus Christ Himself ; and as many either do not receive the Sacraments at all, or do not receive them well, they thus render the death of Jesus Christ useless in their regard.

Eighteenth Instruction on the Creed

THE PASSION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD

FROM the mystery of the Incarnation and Nativity of our Lord, the Creed passes on immediately to the mystery of His Passion and Death—from the beginning to the consummation. But the intermediate mysteries of His life—what of them? The answer is that the Creed proposes to the belief of the faithful only a brief abridgment of the principal truths and principal articles necessary for salvation, an abridgment adapted to the capacity of all. Doubtless, it is highly desirable and advantageous to be familiar with the life of Jesus Christ, which is a treasure of knowledge and light; and for a Christian who can read, this life should be a much more delightful food than the reading of romances, novels, and similar works that are sometimes far from edifying. This knowledge, however, is not within the reach of all, and in any event is not absolutely necessary to salvation, since to be saved it suffices to know the principal mysteries.

Indeed, the Gospels furnish but scanty records of the life of Jesus Christ, from His birth to His thirtieth year. All we know of Him during those years comes to this, that on the eighth day He was circumcised and adored by the Magi; that on the fortieth day He was presented in the Temple; then that he was obliged to fly into Egypt to escape the fury of Herod; returned to Galilee after the death of that prince; disputes with the doctors when twelve years old; and from that epoch to His thirtieth year, not a word except His continual subjection and obedience to Joseph and Mary: *He was subject to them*. In His thirtieth year He began His public life by His baptism at the hands of St. John, not because he had need of baptism, but for our instruction. Then, after a fast of forty days in the desert, He unfolded His mission as the Ambassador sent by God to instruct the world, and began His preaching, which lasted about three years, and which had such success that the people flocked in crowds to hear Him—a circumstance that aroused such hatred and jealousy in the scribes and pharisees that they resolved at all cost to ruin and destroy Him, God thus disposing for the sake of our redemption and salvation.

This much being borne in mind, we now come to the explanation of the fourth article, in connexion with which it is not my intention to give a detailed or circumstantial narrative of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, such as is given by the Evangelists. Apart from the fact that the recital would be too long, it does not seem necessary, since the story of the sufferings of our Saviour is known to everyone. I shall do no more, then, than give a brief summary of the chief events connected therewith, explaining one by one the few words that compose this article, after which all that remains to be done is to solve certain difficulties and establish certain truths.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate. Now, why is mention here made of Pilate? Simply to ensure greater certainty, by fixing the precise epoch of the Passion, which took place when Pilate was Governor of Judea, in the name of the Emperor Tiberius. It was this same Pilate who in his capacity as judge condemned Christ to death; whence it follows that these words signify that Christ suffered during the governorship of Pilate, and by sentence of Pilate.

And what did He suffer? Considered in itself the Passion includes the Crucifixion and death; but the sense of this part of the article is limited to the sufferings which Jesus Christ endured from the Garden of Olives to the Hill of Calvary, and which were both numerous and atrocious, internal as well as external, in soul as well as in body.

I. He had not yet begun to suffer in His body, when He was already suffering in soul in the Garden of Gethsemani, where sadness, fear and sorrow so pressed Him down as to make Him sweat blood and reduced Him to direst agony. Three causes contributed to this interior martyrdom: (1) A clear and distinct foreknowledge of the bitter sufferings that awaited Him; (2) the foreknowledge that these sufferings would be of no avail to countless Christians, who would, He knew, be lost, even though purchased at so great a price; and (3) the dreadful, abominable vision of the world's sins, which He had taken on His own shoulders.

But here a question naturally presents itself: These three considerations which in that hour filled His soul with such bitter anguish—had they not always been before His mind from the first instant of His Incarnation and at every moment of His life? Assuredly they were. Why, then, is it that it was only there in the Garden that He began to be sorrowful and sad? The reason is this: On the one hand, as Man-God His passions were perfectly subject to His will; while on the other hand, only then, and not till then, did the hour

arrive which had been fixed for Him to suffer for us ; and therefore it was only then that *He began to be sorrowful and sad.*

And in what way ? Have you ever seen in summer time the summit of a mountain lighted up by the sun, while round its base rage whirl-winds and tempests and lightning-flashes ? So it was with our divine Saviour in the garden. He recalled and restricted to the nobler parts of His soul all the rays of the beatific vision which He naturally enjoyed as Son of God, and which had hitherto filled the interior parts of His soul with bliss ; and this done, He permitted the latter to become a prey to terror, bitterness, and cruellest desolation.

But, in addition to the pains of the Garden of Gethsemani, three other circumstances combined to lacerate His soul :—

(1) The disloyalty of His disciples and apostles, one of whom perfidiously sold Him, another denied Him with an oath, and all vilely abandoned Him. What a wound for the Heart of Jesus, that of all His followers, whom He had loved so dearly and treated so kindly, there was not even one brave enough to speak out for Him, but that all weakly turned their backs on Him in His hour of trial !

(2) The total loss of His reputation amongst the people. They had witnessed His miracles ; they had eagerly followed Him everywhere ; they had regarded Him as a great prophet ; they had even wished to proclaim Him king ; and a few days previously they had received Him enthusiastically in Jerusalem, bearing palms and chanting loud hosannas. And now all this suddenly changed—they believed they had been deceived and deluded by Him ; they were ashamed of having listened to Him ; they regarded Him as an impostor, a hypocrite and a cheat ; and they furiously clamoured for His death.

(3) The execrable contempt shown to His adorable Person, in being conducted before the tribunals of Annas, Caiphas, Pilate and Herod. To see Himself bound and dragged about like a thief and a malefactor ; sent to and fro from one judge to another as an object of idle curiosity ; used as a plaything for the lowest of the rabble who were permitted to rail at Him and vomit forth all sorts of insult and blasphemy against Him ; nay, to see Himself dressed up as a fool and offered as a spectacle throughout the streets of Jerusalem ; to see Himself clothed as a mock king, and made to sit half naked on a stone, in the midst of a band of ignorant and insolent soldiers—all these insults and outrages were the cruellest and most deeply-felt part of the torments He had to suffer in His most holy soul.

II. He suffered also in His sacred body, which was delivered over to

the mercy of slaves, soldiers, guards—to all that cared to ill-treat Him ; which was made the sport of all the Jewish and gentile rabble, and, in them, of the fury of the demons by whom they were possessed ; which was spat on, smitten, scourged with unexampled cruelty ; crowned with thorns, bruised, torn, disfigured ; and finally reduced to such a condition that from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot His body was one mass of bruises, wounds, and blood, so much so that the appearance and features of a man were no longer discernible in Him : *From the sole of His foot to the top of His head, there is no soundness therein—wounds and bruises and swelling sores—they are not bound up nor dressed, nor fomented with oil . . . we have seen Him and there was no sightliness.* Such, then, were the principal sufferings of Jesus Christ from the Garden of Olives to Calvary ; and it is in these we profess our belief when we say that He *suffered*.

III. But of all His sufferings the most painful and the most ignominious was the Crucifixion ; and this is why special mention is made of it in the fourth article in the words, *He was crucified*. Not content with all they had thus far made Him suffer, the Jews crowned their horrid work by nailing Him to the Cross. That this punishment was above all others most painful, each one can easily imagine by picturing to oneself a body suspended by hard nails, and resting altogether on its own wounds, which become more and more painful and extended every moment that passes. But it was also the most ignominious of punishments, since amongst the Jews it was regarded as the most infamous of all, and, on that account, reserved for the lowest slaves. To crown this ignominy, they crucified Him between two thieves, as if He were the malefactor-in-chief. To all this must be added the mockery and derision of an immense crowd of spectators ; the grief of His Mother who stood at the foot of the Cross ; and finally the privation of all help, of all sensible consolation.

Thus, then, Jesus suffered every kind of torment in soul and body ; and it is not easy to say which of the two—His interior or exterior suffering—was the more bitter ; all were without limit or measure, and, on that account, likened by the Prophets to the immensity of the ocean : *Great as the sea is Thy destruction ; and : I am come into the depth of the sea and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me.*

IV. The word *Dead* is added in the third place, and signifies that after having endured torture and agony for three hours on the Cross, He at length consummated His sacrifice, and tasted the bitter chalice of death, by the separation of His most holy soul from His sacred

body. What, you may ask, was the necessity for inserting this word, when speaking of a man nailed to the wood of a cross from which he could only escape by death? The reason is that it is of the utmost importance for us to be assured of His death; for as death cannot but be regarded as the greatest of all humiliations for a God to undergo, one might otherwise be inclined to doubt whether He really did die.

It is, then, an article of faith that on the Cross Jesus Christ died a real death, exactly like to that by which the life of all other men comes to an end, that is to say, by the real separation of soul and body: *Bowing His head He gave up the ghost.* He was recognized to be dead by those who had crucified Him; for, while they broke the bones of the legs of the two thieves, because these still showed some signs of life, they saw that Jesus was already dead, and that it was unnecessary in His case. Moreover, a soldier, eager to assure himself of His death, plunged a lance into His side, whence issued forth blood and water,—two mysterious fountains which were to supply all the sacraments.

But to establish this truth still more securely, it is added in the last place that He was *buried*,—and, as we know, only the dead are buried. As soon as He had expired, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich and influential man among the Jews, demanded of Pilate the body of our Lord to give it honourable burial, and Pilate, having ascertained from the centurion that death had really taken place, granted the request. And then Joseph, aided by Nicodemus, took the body down from the Cross, and having embalmed it, laid it in a new sepulchre, hewn out of the solid rock, in which no body had previously been buried. Now, these two fervent disciples of Jesus had every opportunity of making sure of the death of their beloved Master, and they were so convinced of it that they buried His body.

We must not, however, imagine that at the death of Jesus Christ His Divinity was separated from His body and soul, in the same way as His soul was separated from His body. No; the Divine Word never left that which He had assumed in His Incarnation: “That which the Word assumed He never abandoned.” He had assumed a soul and a body—human nature complete; so now, even though in death the soul was separated from the body, the Divinity remained always inseparably united as before to both the one and the other. And precisely in virtue of His Divinity, which remained always inseparable from soul and body, the body, corruptible though it was, underwent no corruption in the tomb; and it was also in virtue of the

Divinity that on the third day the body became reunited to the soul, and returned to a new life, as we shall see in the next article.

Many things in this article remain to be explained : (1) How could Jesus Christ, being God, suffer and die ? The answer is that it was precisely because He could neither suffer nor die as God, that He became man. It was not the Divinity, then, that suffered and died, but His humanity alone, that is, His soul and body ; and hence He really died. Nevertheless, we can truly say that God suffered and died, because His Person was truly Divine, although it was only in the humanity He had assumed that He actually suffered.

(2) But, you will say, the fact that Jesus Christ was God rendered His humanity insensible, or at least less sensible, to the violence of pains and torments ? Such a notion is absolutely erroneous. His flesh was sensitive, just like ours—even more than ours ; for, having taken a body to suffer, the Holy Ghost closely adapted it towards this end, and had fashioned it, as the prophets say, to the knowledge of all sufferings and all sorrows : *The Man of sorrows, and knowing infirmities*. Hence He was of such exquisite sensibility and delicacy that pain was more keenly felt by Him than by any other man.

(3) But how could a man last so long amidst such torments ? Ah ! it is precisely here that His Divinity was displayed—not, indeed, to remove or diminish the sense of pain, but to keep his body alive the longer in the midst of atrocious tortures, so that He might suffer more, and at the same time prove still more clearly by the miracle of His long agony that He was true by God.

Passing over the other miracles which openly attested His Divinity—the sudden fainting away of the soldiers who had come to capture Him ; the ear restored to Malchus under their very eyes ; and especially at the moment of His death, the wonderful eclipse that at mid-day suddenly deprived the world of light—an eclipse noted by the very Gentiles themselves, who have preserved the memory of it ; the extraordinary quaking of the earth ; the bursting asunder of the rocks ; the opening of the tombs ; the convulsion of all nature ; the centurion crying out at the sight of these prodigies : *Truly this Man was the Son of God* ; and others descending from Calvary, striking their breasts in compunction and sorrow—passing over all this, was not the very miracle of such resistance to an ocean of pain an evident proof of His Divinity ?

What mere man could have survived the bloody scourging, and the still more cruel crowning with thorns ? And yet after so cruel a martyrdom, our Saviour did not cease to live ; He could still bear

the torment of the Crucifixion, remain three hours on the tree of the Cross, and, finally, exhausted as He was in spirit, and bereft of blood and strength, utter at the moment of death so strong a cry as to be heard by the spectators who were farthest away from Him. Could human nature alone be capable of such endurance? No. Let us, then confess that Jesus Christ, even in this mystery of greatest abjection and ignominy, willed to prove that He was true God, by suffering and dying truly as a God.

But was it necessary for our salvation that Jesus Christ should suffer all He did? Doubtless it was not absolutely necessary, since all the actions of Christ, being the actions of a Man-God, were of incomparable value and infinite merit, because of the infinite dignity of the Word united hypostatically to His human nature. Hence the least of His humiliations—a single tear, a sigh, one single prayer—would have been enough to appease God, satisfy the Divine justice for us, and redeem the whole human race. Why, then, this superabundance of pains and torments, if much less could have redeemed us? The reasons I shall give later on, when discussing the various ends which God had in view in this mystery, in addition to the primary and principal end which we have already examined, that is to say, the redemption and salvation of mankind.

I will conclude by pointing out, as the fruit of this instruction, that although the chalice of sorrows which He drained for us far surpasses our needs, yet we are not thereby dispensed from the obligation of doing our part; nay, that from that very fact we should infer the indispensable necessity of suffering after the example of Jesus Christ. It would plainly be altogether unbecoming if Jesus Christ, who alone was innocent, should be the only one to suffer, and we, the guilty ones, be let off scot free. But what is still more important is, that the satisfaction paid by Christ for us, however superabundant it may be, will be profitable to us only on condition that we are prepared to take up our cross, and follow in His steps.

He himself has said so clearly: *He who wishes to come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow me.* He expects us to furnish the complement of His sufferings, as did St. Paul, who declares: *I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ.* This truth is hard and unpleasant to our fastidious nature, which is an enemy to all fatigue and suffering; but there it stands, and Jesus Christ repeats: *He who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.*

But after all this cross of ours involves neither shedding of blood nor dying. It consists simply in the renouncing of our un-

regulated desires, in the exact, but naturally laborious, fulfilment of our general duties as Christians and of the particular duties of our state, in the exercise of voluntary penance and mortification, or at least in Christian patience and resignation in bearing those trials that God sends us. There is our cross ; and although it seems heavy to us, it can never be compared with that which Jesus Christ has borne for us. And can we have the indelicacy to refuse it ? Indelicate, that is, only with regard to our Saviour, whose example we follow so little ; but with regard to ourselves, I should rather call it pernicious folly, since it deprives us of all the fruits of His Passion, and Death, which must one day decide our lot for all eternity. Reflect well, then, on this truth : Either we have no faith at all ; or, if we have, it is a useless deposit, serving no practical purpose as far as we are concerned.

Nineteenth Instruction on the Creed

THE CAUSES OF THE PASSION

IN our last instruction we dwelt as briefly as possible on the mystery of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, which we profess in the fourth article of the Creed. But our exposition would be very barren and dry, indeed, did we not also consider the principal truths flowing from this mystery, and particularly all that concerns its fruit and its efficacy. Proceeding, then, to speak of these truths, I shall set them forth in the order in which they successively present themselves to my mind. As a foundation, however, of what I have to say, let us first see what was the cause of the Passion of Christ, and what its end.

If we refer to secondary causes, they were exactly as numerous as the men who actually took part in making Christ suffer—Judas, who betrayed Him for sordid gain ; the Jews who through envy handed Him over to Pilate ; Pilate himself who through vile human respect condemned Him to death, though convinced of His innocence ; and finally, the soldiers, officials and executioners, who carried out the sentence.

But the first and principal cause of the Passion was sin, for which we owed condign satisfaction to God, and for which Jesus Christ constituted Himself the victim : *He was delivered up for our sins*. Had there been no sin, God would never have permitted His divine Son to be so maltreated, and Jesus Christ would never have allowed Himself to be put to death ; but since our redemption and salvation were at stake, God thus disposed and pre-ordained. Not, indeed, that God inspired Judas with the detestable design of betraying Him into the hands of His enemies, nor these latter with their sacrilegious cruelty towards His person, for God cannot be the author of evil ; but He permitted it all, so that all should contribute to the accomplishment of His merciful design in our regard.

Hence two conclusions : (1) The first is that Jesus Christ suffered and died of His own free will. If He had not freely abandoned Himself into the hands of His enemies, they could not have touched a hair of His head : *He was offered because it was His own will*. In fact we

know from the Gospels that not once only, but frequently, the Jews had plotted against His life ; that they had tried at one time to stone Him, and at another to hurl Him down from the top of a precipice ; but much as they desired it, none ever dared to lay a hand on Him : *They sought therefore to apprehend Him, and no man laid hands on Him.*¹ And why ? Here is the answer of St. John : *Because His hour was not yet come*, that is, the hour fixed by God. But when that hour did come, God permitted them to lay hands on Him, and they no longer found any opposition to their impious designs : *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*²

Nay, recognizing this hour which He had foretold to His disciples, He Himself went forth to meet His enemies. A word of His, one single word, casts them to the ground ; but far from betaking Himself to flight, He waited till they had recovered their senses, and then allowed Himself to be taken and bound like an innocent lamb. Before His judges He did not try to clear Himself of the calumnious imputations made against Him,—it would have been easy for Him to confound His enemies and to prove His innocence. And, finally, at the moment of His death on the Cross, He uttered such a cry as was not possible for a dying man—showing thereby that He had the power and the strength to live as long as He willed. Thus in a thousand ways He let it be seen that His Passion was an effect of His own will, influenced only by our needs, and the desire of effecting our salvation : *He was offered because it was His own will.*

(2) The second inference is that the fruit of His Passion and Death perfectly corresponds to the merciful intention and design He had in undergoing them. His design, according to Sacred Scripture, was to deprive Satan completely of the power he had usurped : *That through death he might destroy him who had the empire of death ; to blot out the handwriting of the decree (of damnation) that was against us . . . fastening it to the Cross ; as well as : to save that which was lost ; and in Him and by Him to bless all the nations : That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.* The fruit of His Passion and Death, therefore, was our deliverance from the slavery of sin and of the demon, the re-opening of the kingdom of heaven that had been closed to all men from the beginning, and, finally, all the graces and helps necessary towards our eternal salvation.

From all this we may infer the universality of the redemption, which means that Jesus Christ suffered and died for all, and that all should acknowledge Him as their Saviour. The words of God on this point

¹ John vii. 30.

² Luke xxii. 53.

are so clear and precise in Sacred Scripture, that it is scarcely credible that men are really to be found who, at the expense of truth, no less than to their own loss, dare to teach the contrary and say that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has neither shed His blood nor offered His death for the salvation of all men,—an impious heretical doctrine, a doctrine injurious to God, ruinous to souls, and calculated to destroy Christian hope, to extinguish all fervour, and to render us careless and heedless, if not hopeless and desperate ; and hence a doctrine justly condemned by the Church.

In the Sacred Scriptures, Jesus Christ is called the Saviour of the world, the Redeemer of the world, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. We read in St. Paul that : *He gave Himself a redemption for all* ;¹ in St. John : *He is a propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world* ;² in St. Paul : *As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive* ; and that : *He is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful*.³ These passages, and many others of a similar tone, either have no meaning at all, or they signify the universality of the redemption, without any restriction, modification or exception. In complete accord with Holy Scripture are the Fathers of the Church. The price of salvation, then, was paid for all by our common Redeemer ; apart altogether from the manner in which it is applied in relation to many, the ways of Providence should be humbly adored by all, and called into question by none, and least of all by us who are sealed with the precious gift of faith.

We must not, then, listen to those who would restrict the blessing of redemption to a few privileged souls. Why appeal to the inscrutable judgments of God, when faith no less than reason clearly teaches the contrary ? Yes, even reason. Bear this well in mind, that any doctrine involving an idea unworthy of God, of His infinite goodness and justice—any doctrine tending to destroy one's confidence in God or one's zeal in the practice of good works (two things strictly commanded by God)—must be regarded as false and erroneous, and must be rejected at once. God would no longer be God if He ceased to be infinitely good and just ; nor can He be in contradiction with Himself by commanding things which would be impossible were we to admit the truth of the doctrine in question.

But, you may say, if Jesus Christ has suffered and died for all, how is it that in spite of this many are lost ? How reconcile the

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 6.² 1 John ii. 2.³ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

efficacy and universality of the redemption with the great number of the reprobate, even amongst Catholics, as is preached to us over and over again ?

This is only too true ; but let us enquire into the reason, and see whether it is due to God, or to ourselves. Many are indeed damned ; but the reason is because many place obstacles in the way of the merits of the Passion, and, through their own fault and malice, render useless the blood which He shed for them. Suppose an excellent doctor were to discover a remedy capable of healing all ills—yet in spite of that many would still remain ill, either because they would not avail themselves of that remedy, or because they would use it wrongly. In the same way, though Jesus Christ has prepared a remedy sufficient for the needs of all, many, nevertheless, continue to be lost, because they neglect the means prescribed for the proper use of it, and render themselves unworthy of the graces which Jesus Christ merited for them, and which would infallibly lead them to salvation. In proof of this it is enough to cast a glance at what goes on every day around us. How many seriously attend to their sanctification and salvation, are vigilant enemies of sin, attentive to their duties, mortified in their desires and appetites, and zealous in the practice of good ? In truth they are but few indeed—carelessness, idleness, love of vice, satisfaction of the passions, predominate and prevail amongst the greater number of Christians.

Nay, there are not wanting certain ignorant or presumptuous souls by whom the redemption of Christ is turned into an occasion of sin and impenitence. Willingly do such as these repeat with St. John : *God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him* ; and so far all is well ; but from this maxim they set out to encourage themselves to sin and to persevere in sin, while all the time promising themselves impunity and even a happy end in spite of their unworthy lives. If the redemption had power to save with such dispositions as these, one need not hesitate to affirm that it would have been an ill-considered and pernicious work, inasmuch as it would have proved a stimulus and incentive to sin and vice.

From the fact, then, that many are lost, we must not infer that the redemption of Christ is wanting in efficacy and universality ; but rather that the redemption, though in itself of infinite value, is insufficient without our own co-operation. And, indeed, who can doubt this ? “ He that made thee without thyself, will not save thee without thyself.” Only children, dying before the use of reason, are saved

by the merits of Jesus Christ applied to them in holy Baptism; but no adult can be saved without his own co-operation, that is to say, without sincere contrition for his faults, without careful avoidance of sin and its occasions, without faithful correspondence with the graces of God, without the practice of prayer, sacraments, and Christian virtues; for these are precisely the means by which the merits and the virtues of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ are applied to our souls.

Here, then, is what is required of us. Jesus Christ having preceded us along the dolorous way, and having on His part furnished us with all that is necessary for our journey, we on our part must be strong and resolute in following Him faithfully and in working in concert with Him. We are not called on to penetrate the secrets of divine Providence regarding our future lot; all we have to do is to make good use of the means of salvation that are given us, attending to them seriously and with zeal, and praying God with humility and perseverance to grant us the grace of a happy death.

To obtain this result, no more salutary practice can be recommended than frequent and familiar reflection on the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ crucified—behold the great object that should occupy us more than any other. It should be the dearest and most constant food of our souls, and not merely the subject of empty and passing emotion on such days as Good Friday. The gratitude we owe to Christ crucified, as well as our own personal interest, should lead us to meditate frequently on the Passion.

(1) *Gratitude*, because the Passion of Jesus Christ is the greatest, the noblest, of all blessings, the sublimest excess of Divine Goodness. If a God has really shed His blood for us; if He has sacrificed His life for us; if it was His death that placated the anger of the Lord, put an end to our misfortunes, opened the treasures of Divine Mercy, the source of every good; it would, beyond any doubt, be unparalleled ingratitude to live in forgetfulness of Him. In recognition of such services we should suffer every kind of pain for Him; but He only demands that we devote a few of our thoughts to Him—a few loving and grateful thoughts on the sufferings He endured for us. And what could be more just? Yet *the just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart.*¹

It was for this purpose that He instituted the great, the most holy, and most august sacrifice of the Mass, to be a perpetual memorial of His Passion and Death: *As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord.*² And hence,

¹ Is. lvii. 1.

² 1 Cor. xi. 26.

when assisting at Mass, above all other times, we should think on the Passion of Christ, and make it the object of our devotion.

(2) Besides the gratitude we owe to Jesus Christ, *our own interest* should inspire this devotion ; for there is no thought more efficacious than this, none more conducive to our sanctification. The thought of a God suffering and dying for us, shows us in the clearest light the immensity of the love He had for us, the dignity and value of our souls redeemed at so great a price, the enormity and guilt of sin so rigorously punished in Him by Divine Justice, and the model of the sublime virtues practised by Jesus Christ in a great and heroic degree. This thought is, then, highly calculated to produce in us salutary impressions of affection for God, abhorrence of sin, love of penance, and zeal in imitating the virtues of our Saviour.

This thought is also eminently calculated to make us triumph over all our enemies—over the world, the flesh and the devil. The devil tempts us to despair and presumption ; but the Passion of Christ preserves us from both the one and the other, by inspiring us on the one hand with a lively hope, and on the other with salutary fear. The world and the flesh tempt us by allurements to pleasures, and aversion from suffering ; but the Passion of Christ inspires us with abhorrence of the former and love of the latter. Finally, it is our sweetest and strongest comfort in all our difficulties—there is no affliction or trial which does not find its example and alleviation in the sufferings of Christ. And therefore, St. Peter, when instructing the faithful to be strong against the assaults of temptation and its evil consequences, recommends them above all else to arm themselves with the thought of the sufferings of Jesus Christ : *Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought.*¹

But to meditate profitably on the Passion and Death of Christ we must do so in such a way as to be deeply penetrated and moved thereby. For this purpose spiritual writers lay down various methods of meditating on the Passion, so as to derive therefrom the best results :

(1) The first consists in considering the Passion, not as something past and gone, but as something actually present before us. Things that are far off do not, as a rule, make a deep impression ; hence we must consider the sufferings of our Lord as if they actually were taking place under our eyes. This is what is done by Holy Church, which in the course of the year represents to us in her different solemnities all the mysteries of our religion as if they were taking place that day.

¹ 1 Peter iv. 1.

and says to us: "This is the Nativity of our Lord; this, the day of His Resurrection; this, the day of His Ascension," and so on.

(2) To consider the Passion of Jesus Christ, not as a favour done to all men, but as a grace specially shown to each one of us. A favour often seems to lose its value by being common; but here at least this is a mistake; for though Jesus Christ suffered for all, He nevertheless suffered with as much affection for each one of us, as for all together. Each one of us was distinctly present in His mind: "If, says St. Bernard, there was no other man on earth but you to be redeemed, He would have done as much for you alone as He suffered for all men together." We can, then, and we ought to apply this mercy specially to ourselves, just as if it was personally intended for each one of us. This is what St. Paul did when he repeated with lively faith and affection: *He loved me and delivered Himself for me.*¹

(3) Having considered His sufferings and all their attendant circumstances, let us enter into ourselves and bring home to our minds that we are the cause of all He had to suffer. This is a truth of faith: *He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins.*² And this truth is enough to move even the hardest of hearts to compassion, if we attentively consider who it is that suffers, what He suffers, for whom He suffers, and how lovingly He suffers.

If we meditate in this way on the Passion of Jesus Christ, our meditation will not be fruitless. But how can such a meditation be made by those—and they are so many—who do not even have near them a Crucifix? A priest is often surprised and astonished when on visiting the sick and dying he sees no sign of a Crucifix about the house. Is not the Crucifix the true standard of the Catholic? What kind of Catholics are we? what our worship? what our hope?

Let us at least carry in our hearts an affectionate and solid devotion to Christ crucified. Remember that when in your last agony, in the final separation from all—relatives and friends—the Crucifix alone will remain with you. If during life you have remembered Jesus Christ with true devotion, He will remember you in death by His powerful protection, dispelling your fears, supporting you against the torment and anguish of that hour, filling your heart with sweet and glad affection which will at one and the same time be your confidence, your comfort, your peace and your security. But if during life the Crucifix has been something indifferent and a stranger to you, if you have not applied yourself to study and meditate on that book, what consolation or comfort can you hope to derive from it then? Think well on this point, and take the necessary precautions in time.

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

² Is. liii. 5.

Twentieth Instruction on the Creed

END OF THE INCARNATION AND PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

IN our exposition of the third and fourth articles of the Creed we have reviewed the mysteries of the Incarnation, Birth, Passion, Death and Burial of Jesus Christ, that is to say, the mysteries of humiliation and abasement. But before passing to the mysteries of exaltation and of glory contained in the next three articles, it will be necessary to explain fully the end of the Incarnation and of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The Apostles' Creed says nothing expressly on this point, but the Creed read at Mass has the following explicit words: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." These words declare the end of these mysteries to be our salvation and redemption; and such was, indeed, their primary and principal end; but it was not the only one, as two reasons lead us to conclude:

(1) The coming of Jesus Christ to redeem us was necessary only on the supposition that God demanded condign satisfaction for our faults; for such satisfaction should of necessity be proportionate to the offence, and consequently infinite like the offence, and hence could only be offered by a God made man. But could not the Lord grant us grace and pardon independently of any such condition? Certainly He could; just as He created us by a single word, so could He have saved us by a single word. But even granted that our redemption could be effected only by way of due satisfaction offered to God, there would appear to be no necessity for that great multitude of sorrows to which Jesus Christ subjected Himself.

(2) As all the actions of Christ were really of infinite value because of the infinite dignity of His divine Person, the least of His humiliations—a tear, a sigh, a supplication—was sufficient for our redemption, was sufficient to appease God, satisfy His divine justice for us, redeem the whole human race. Why, then, did He will to undergo so many sufferings and torments if he could have redeemed us at a smaller price?

These two reflections necessarily lead us to recognize that in the

mission and labours of Jesus Christ, God had other ends in addition to our redemption and salvation, and that it was to accomplish these that He employed this means in preference to any other. These ends I now purpose to explain briefly in order to deduce therefrom an important point of Christian morality.

I. The other ends contemplated by God in the Incarnation of the Divine Word may be reduced to two—that is to say, His greater glory and our greater advantage.

As regards the first, the extrinsic glory of God consists in the manifestation of His divine attributes. Now, nothing brings those more into prominence than the mystery of the Incarnation and the subsequent labours of Jesus Christ for love of us. It is here that the perfections of God are revealed in a clear and distinct way, particularly His omnipotence, His wisdom, His justice, His holiness, His infinite hatred of sin, His goodness, and His immense love for us :—

(1) *His omnipotence*, resulting from the union in one and the same person of two infinitely distinct natures, the divine and the human—which is as much as to say, eternity and time, life and death, happiness and misery, immensity and littleness, everything and nothing. What a prodigy ! That the Babe conceived in the womb of Mary, and born in a manger, should be true Son of God, consubstantial with the Most High, true God like Him ! Two terms separated by infinity and yet combined in a strange and incomprehensible manner !—God-Man ; Man-God ; Word and Flesh ; Flesh and Word !

Hence it is that Sacred Scripture, speaking of this mystery, calls it the crowning work of Divine Omnipotence, and even puts it before the work of creation. Thus, speaking of creation, Sacred Scripture says that to form the heavens and to spread them out over our heads, God employed simply the force of His fingers : *I will behold Thy heavens, the works of Thy fingers* ;¹ while speaking of the Incarnation, we are told that He employed therein all the strength of His mighty arm : *He hath shewed might in His arm*.²

(2) *The infinite wisdom of God* is manifested in harmonizing the interests of His infinite justice with those of His infinite mercy. On the one hand the justice of God demanded satisfaction and punishment for our sins ; but on the other hand His mercy cherished designs of pardon and peace in our regard. How unite these two ? If God punishes us, where is His mercy ? If God pardons us, where His justice ? But in the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, He has

¹ Ps. viii. 4.

² Luke i. 51.

found a way of reconciling these two extremes ; for Jesus Christ pays in His own person and with the utmost rigour the penalties due to our sins, and thus satisfies Divine Justice ; while we, through the merits of Jesus Christ, gratuitously receive the pardon of our faults, and thus Divine Mercy is satisfied.

(3) *His holiness and His infinite hatred of sin.* If Jesus Christ had not come into the world, if He had not done and suffered for us all that we know Him to have done and suffered, we should have but a very faint idea of the malice of sin and of the displeasure it causes Him. Whereas on seeing God treat His only-begotten Son, the Holy of Holies, with such rigour, solely because He had taken the form of a sinner, we are enabled to understand the enormity of sin and the implacable hatred which God bears towards it.

In this we have the greatest proof that even God could give us. Neither the universal deluge, nor the partial deluges of fire, nor the many other fearful scourges sent by God in punishment of sin,—neither hell itself prepared to expiate it, nor eternity with all its torments, prove God's hatred to sin so forcibly as does the sight of His only-begotten Son come down from heaven to earth, subjected to thirty-three years of misery and toil, and finally nailed to a cross for our sins. For the least suffering endured by a God is out of all proportion to the loss of all creatures.

(4) *Finally, the goodness of God and His infinite love for us.* Of all the divine perfections, this it is that shines more brilliantly in the mystery of the Incarnation :—

(a) Because in this mystery God has communicated Himself to us in the most intimate manner conceivable, that is to say, by the union of His divine Being with our flesh. Since the Incarnation, our flesh is the flesh of Jesus Christ : He has elevated it, sanctified it, in a certain sense deified it. He has contracted a most intimate alliance with us, in virtue of which we are but one and the same thing with Him, and in a true and real sense are brothers of Jesus Christ and children of God—a grace, a greatness, a dignity making us superior to the very angels, whose nature our Lord did not assume, as He assumed ours. Whence we alone, unlike them, can say that Jesus Christ is our flesh, that He is our brother.

(b) Because God in the Incarnation gave up and sacrificed for our salvation all that was most dear and most precious to Him, that is, His only-begotten : *God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.* If, in order to free a malefactor from a gibbet which had been justly deserved, a monarch of this world were to substitute

his own innocent son, the heir to his crown, what an excess of charity would this not be? But this, of which no one ever saw an example on this earth, and which may be regarded as a dream, is exactly what God has done for us. He has handed over His only-begotten Son to death in order to liberate us from its thralls: in Him He gave full vent to His anger in order to manifest His mercy towards us. And what greater proof than this could He give us of His love for us?

It is evident, then, from what has been said up to the present, that the Incarnation has manifested the divine perfections in a glorious, nay infinite, way; and hence that in selecting such a means for our redemption, our Lord has chosen the means that best redounds to His glory.

II. But we must also add that it was the most advantageous for us; and this for two principal reasons:—

(1) To facilitate our union with God. Earthy and material as we are, only with difficulty could we raise ourselves up to God, who is a pure spirit, far above our senses. What, then, did our Lord do? Seeing that we could not ascend to Him, He has descended to us; He has rendered Himself visible and palpable to us; He dwelt amongst us as one of us, and desired to be seen and to converse familiarly with us, in order that His most holy humanity might serve as a ladder whereby we might raise ourselves up and be united with God. Oh, admirable condescension, prefigured by Him in the efforts of Elias and Eliseus to resuscitate a dead infant! They stretched themselves over the corpse, and so diminished and shortened their bodies as to adapt them to the small stature of the deceased infant, adapting limb to limb as best they could, and thus infusing heat and life into them. In the same way, to re-animate us to the life of grace and to unite us to Himself, Jesus Christ *emptied Himself*; He belittled Himself, adjusting His sovereign majesty to our baseness, His supreme greatness to our nothingness.

(2) But, what is more important,—and this is the second reason,—is, that in this way He gave us in His own person a most perfect pattern of all virtues. Blinded as we were by sin, and buried in profound darkness, we had need of a model on which to mould our life—a model which, on the one hand, should be infallible and not subject to error, and on the other should be visible and open to our eyes. Now, we have this model in Jesus Christ and in His whole life in the years of suffering, of toil, of labour, and of every kind of virtue, which He led among us. He taught us the way to heaven more by example than by words; He even willed to suffer more than was needful for our

redemption, that His love might shine no less brightly before our eyes than the light of His example. And it was precisely because illumined by the light and swayed by the attraction of these examples that Christianity has produced so many heroes—the poor in spirit, austere anchorites, chaste virgins, fearless martyrs, apostles and confessors inflamed with charity and ardent zeal. But if such heroism is not required of all, at least it is strictly necessary for all to render themselves like unto Jesus Christ by the practice of these virtues which are essential to the Christian—patience, meekness, charity, humility, mortification, penance and the rest. Oh! make no mistake in this.

I would in the last place inculcate devotion to Christ crucified; now this devotion consists in imitating Him, in bearing His likeness within ourselves, in following His example: *Until Christ be formed in you,*¹ says St. Paul. The worship, the love, the gratitude, the recognition due to Him, consists principally in being like unto Him.

And this likeness is not a matter of arbitrary perfection, but a precise and indispensable duty incumbent on all who wish to be saved. The conduct and example of Jesus Christ are a law, a rule, for us. He suffered, says St. Peter, not only to redeem us, but to leave us an example which we ought to follow: *Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps.*² *I am the way*, says Jesus Christ, and no one reaches life who does not walk by this way. Now, this way, St. Bernard says, is no other than example: “The way lies in the example”; and hence our Saviour adds: *I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also.*³ Finally, the Eternal Father, who sent Him into the world, framed the great immutable decree of admitting into His kingdom no one in whom He does not find reflected the image of His divine Son: *For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*⁴ “Regard Him closely,” He says to us; “see the divine and necessary model that I have set up for you to follow; there can be no other than He. He lived among you familiarly; His image is present to you; and the memory of His acts and of His virtues is indelibly depicted in the Gospels. Look on Him and follow His example.”

But without going so far to look for reasons, is not the very name of Christian, which we bear, enough to convince us of this truth? What does the word Christian mean if not a follower of Jesus Christ. But to be a follower of Jesus Christ it is not enough to adore His person, believe His doctrine, reverence His mysteries; it is also necessary to

¹ Gal. iv. 19.² 1 Peter ii. 21.³ John xiii. 15.⁴ Rom. viii. 29.

imitate His example, to clothe ourselves with His divine spirit, to conform ourselves to His image, which He holds up before us. Without this we are not true Christians ; and all devotion that does not lead us to this, is but an illusion and a deception,

Hence we may estimate how much some Christians are deceived in the matter of true devotion. In some, perhaps in many, all devotion is reduced to certain exterior, material practices, which, if but well directed, would lead to real, substantial devotion, but which of themselves do not constitute it, which may even be separated from it, and be coupled with a dissolute life. We see Christians visit churches, assist at Benedictions and Masses frequent sacraments and sermons ; but how unlike Jesus Christ they often are ! What of pardon of injuries and love of enemies, after the example of Him who prayed on the cross for His executioners ? What of detachment from the riches and honours of the world, after the example of Him who deigned to be born, to live and to die in abjection and poverty ? What of penance and mortification, after the example of Him who showed us His head crowned with thorns and His body covered with wounds ? What of resignation to the divine will in the trials of life, after the example of Him who lived and died obedient to the will of His Father in all things ?

But if in practice we see a clear opposition between our conduct and that of Jesus Christ ; if we give way in everything to our senses and our passions ; if the whole tenor of our life is but pride and vanity, avarice and cupidity, weakness and sensuality, why do we boast of the good that is in us ? How can that be ever called good, which does not make us true followers of Jesus Christ ! Let us not be deceived, then—conformity with Him is the touch-stone of true devotion.

Well shall we see our mistake in that great day when all illusions crumble away, that is to say, on the point of death, when the priest will present to us the sacred image of the Crucified One. Conscience and faith alike will tell us then that He who hangs thereon is the only one in whom to place our hope, is the only sure model on whom we should have moulded our lives in order to attain salvation ; but if we are unable to recognize in ourselves any of His features, any of His virtues, what hope of salvation can there remain for us ?

To forestall so great a misfortune, let us determine even from the present moment to study this divine model, to meditate on it attentively, to follow its maxims, to direct ourselves by its example, to fill ourselves with its divine spirit, so that we may become so many faithful copies of our Lord in humility, meekness, charity, mortification,

detachment, and a fervent spirit of piety : *Put you on the Lord Jesus,*¹ in accordance with the obligation assumed at the happy moment of baptism : *For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.*² True, it is not possible to copy this divine model perfectly ; but we ought to endeavour to approach it according to our strength and the measure of the gifts and graces we have received, just as all the saints we venerate have, in a greater or less degree, succeeded in doing.

This is true devotion, the only kind which makes us true Christians or which can apply to us the graces that Jesus Christ came to bring to us upon earth. His death will be useless for us, if His life has not served us as our rule ; we shall not profit of His merits, if we have not profited by His example ; He will not be our Saviour if He has not first been our model. Sometimes there arises within us a tormenting doubt, whether we shall one day be saved or not ; whether we shall or shall not be in the number of the predestined. But the matter is no longer obscure—without scrutinizing the divine decrees, you can resolve your doubts in the words of St. Paul : *Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son*,—those are predestined who shall have been found conformable to the image of His divine Son. Let us compare ourselves often, then, with this divine exemplar, so as to see what likeness we bear to it ; and from this we can safely judge of our future destination, and of our lot for all eternity

¹ Rom. xiii. 14.

² Gal. iii. 27.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL, THE THIRD DAY HE AROSE AGAIN
FROM THE DEAD

1.—General im-
port of the
first part of
the Article.

It is indeed highly important to be conscious of the glory of the burial of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has been discussed in the last article; but it is still more important for the faithful to be aware of the glorious triumphs He has achieved in conquering Satan and despoiling the powers of hell. These triumphs, as also the doctrine of the Resurrection, now demand attention.

These two truths could, indeed, be easily separated and treated apart; yet following the usage of the Fathers, we have deemed it right to discuss the Resurrection in the same chapter with His descent into hell.

The first part of this article, then, proposes for our belief that as soon as Christ had expired, His soul descended into hell, and there remained as long as His body lay in the sepulchre.

Along with this, we also confess in these words that the one same Person of Christ was at one and the same time in hell and in the tomb. Nor need this cause surprise, for, as has been repeatedly said, though His soul had really quitted His body, the Divinity was never once separated from either soul or body.

I.—HE DESCENDED INTO HELL

2.—Meaning of
the word, Hell.

The pastor will throw much light on the words of this article, if he will first show what is here meant by the word *hell*. Hence he will warn the faithful that the word does not here mean the grave, as some have impiously and ignorantly imagined. For the preceding

article teaches that Christ our Lord was buried ; and consequently in transmitting to us the rule of faith there was no reason why the Apostles should here repeat the self-same truth in other and much more obscure terms.

The word hell in this article really denotes those hidden abodes in which are detained the souls that have not yet attained the bliss of heaven. It is in this sense that Sacred Scripture employs the word in various passages. Thus we read in St. Paul : *At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell* ;¹ and in the Acts of the Apostles St. Peter assures us that Christ our Lord was risen, *Having loosed the sorrows of hell*.²

3.—There are three such places—
Hell, Purgatory and Limbo.

These abodes, however, are not all alike. One is a loathsome and dismal prison where, together with the unclean spirits, the souls of the damned suffer eternal torments in unquenchable fire. This place is called Gehenna, the bottomless pit, which is hell, properly so called.

There is another hell, where is the fire of Purgatory, in which the souls of the just are purified by temporary sufferings until such time as they shall be worthy to be admitted into their eternal country, into *which there shall not enter anything defiled*.³ The truth of this doctrine, as the holy Councils declare, is confirmed by Scriptural authority, and by Apostolic tradition ; and the pastor will explain and expound it all the more carefully and frequently because of the fact that we live in times when men do not endure sound doctrine.

A third hell is that in which, previous to the coming of Christ our Lord, the souls of the just were received, and where they enjoyed tranquil repose, exempt from all pain and buoyed up by the blessed hope of redemption. It was precisely to deliver these holy souls who, in the *bosom of Abraham*,⁴ awaited Christ's coming, that our Lord descended into hell.

4.—Real descent of Christ's soul into hell.

We must not, however, imagine that His power and His virtue only, and not also His soul, descended into hell. On the contrary, we must firmly believe that His very soul really and truly descended into hell. On this point we have the direct testimony of David : *Thou shalt not leave My soul in hell*.⁵

¹ Phil. ii. 10. ² Acts ii. 24. ³ Apoc. xxi. 27. ⁴ Luke xvi. 22. ⁵ Ps. xv. 10.

5.—His dignity
not lessened by
His descent
into hell.

But in descending into hell Jesus Christ lost nothing of His supreme power, nor was the splendour of His sanctity dimmed by the smallest stain—nay, rather, this very descent but served to prove beyond all doubt that everything that had been foretold of His sanctity was most true, and that He was the Son of God, as He had already shown by so many miracles.

We shall understand this without difficulty if we compare the different reasons why Christ and why other men descended into hell. All other men descended as captives—He, *free amongst the dead*,¹ descended victorious, to subdue the demons who detained others there in captivity on account of their sins.

Then, all others who descended thither were either tormented by bitter pains, or, even if exempt from every other suffering, were deprived of the beatific vision, and were tortured by the delay of the glory and happiness for which they hungered and thirsted. But Christ our Lord descended, not to suffer in any way, but to liberate the saints and the just from the sorrows of their sad captivity, and to impart to them the fruits of His Passion. By His descent into hell, then, His supreme dignity and power suffered no diminution whatever.

6.—Why He de-
scended into
hell.

All this being explained, the pastor will show that Christ descended into hell not only to despoil the demons and to break the chains that bound the holy Patriarchs and the just, but also to lead them into heaven with Him. This He did in an admirable and glorious manner—His presence at once illumined the captives with radiant light, and filled their souls with boundless joy and gladness; He put them in possession of that unspeakable bliss which consists in the vision of God; and thereby verified His promise to the good thief: *To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise*.²

Long before that the Prophet Osee had predicted the liberation of the just: *O death, I will be thy death, O hell I will be thy bite*.³ The Prophet Zacharias also signified the same: *Thou also by the blood of Thy testament hast sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water*.⁴ Finally, the Apostle gave expression to a similar idea: *Divesting principalities and powers, He made a show of them confidently, triumphing openly over them in Himself*.⁵

¹ Ps. lxxxvii. 6.

² Luke xxiii. 43.

³ Osee xiii. 14.

⁴ Zach. ix. 11.

⁵ Col. ii. 15.

The better to understand the import of this mystery we should frequently call to mind that not only the just who were born after the coming of our Saviour, but also those born before Him, from the days of Adam, or who shall be born to the end of time, have obtained their salvation through His merciful Passion. This is the reason why, previous to His Death and Resurrection, the gates of heaven were open to none—the souls of the just, on their separation from the body, were either carried into *Abraham's bosom*, or, as is still the case with those who have any reparation or satisfaction to make, went to be purified in the fire of Purgatory.

There is also another reason for the descent of our Lord into hell—that there, too, as well as in heaven and on earth, His glory and power might be made manifest, and that *in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*¹

Who can fail here to be filled with wonder and admiration at the surpassing goodness of God to the human race? He willed not only to undergo a most bitter death for us, but also to descend into the lower parts of the earth, in order to liberate and lead to the mansions of bliss the souls that were dear to Him.

II.—HE AROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD

7.—Meaning of this part of the Article. The second part of the fifth article has now to be considered; and the care which the pastor should devote to its explanation is shown by the words of the Apostle: *Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead,*²—for the Apostle's recommendation to Timothy undoubtedly applies to all who are charged with the care of souls.

The sense of this part of the article is this: On Friday, at the ninth hour of the day, Christ our Lord died on the Cross, and on the evening of the same day was buried by His disciples, who by permission of Pilate, the governor, took the body down from the Cross, and deposited it in a new tomb, situated in a garden near at hand. Early on the morning of the third day after His death, that is to say, Sunday, His soul was once more united to His body—so that He who was dead for three days rose again and returned to that life from which He had departed.

¹ Phil. ii. 10.

² 2 Tim. ii. 8.

8.—He arose by
His own power.

By the word Resurrection we are to understand not merely that Christ was raised from the dead, as had happened to several others, but that He rose again by His own power and virtue—a thing unique, and peculiar to Him alone; for it is contrary to nature, and has never been granted to any man, to be able by his own power to raise himself from death to life. This belongs to the supreme power of God alone, as we learn from the Apostle's words: *Although He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.*¹ Now as that supreme power was at no time separated from His body in the tomb, nor from His soul in hell, there existed within the body a Divine force, enabling it to become reunited to the soul; and within the soul a Divine force enabling it to become reunited to the body; so that by His own power He could return to life, and rise from the tomb.

This had been foretold by the inspired Psalmist: *His right hand hath wrought for Him salvation and His arm is holy*;² and our Lord had confirmed it by the testimony of His own lips: *I lay down My life that I may take it up again; and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.*³ It was also in confirmation of this truth that He said to the Jews: *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.*⁴ True, indeed, they understood His words to refer to the glorious temple of stone that lay before their eyes; yet, as is expressly declared by Holy Scripture, in this passage *He spoke of the temple of His body.*⁵ And if we sometimes read in Holy Scripture that Christ our Lord was raised by the Father, this must be understood of Him as man, just as, on the other hand, those passages in which it is narrated that He rose by His own power relate to Him as God.⁶

9.—Christ the
first of all the
risen.

It was also peculiar to Christ that He Himself was the very first to participate in that Divine privilege of the resurrection; hence the Scriptures call Him: *the First-born from the dead*,⁷ and *the First-begotten of the dead*,⁸ while the Apostle thus speaks of Him: *Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep; for by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead; and as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive; but everyone in his own order; the first-fruits Christ, then they that are Christ's.*⁹

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 4.

² Ps. xcvi. 2.

³ John x. 17.

⁴ John ii. 19.

⁵ John ii. 21.

⁶ Acts ii. 24.

⁷ Col. i. 18.

⁸ Apoc. i. 5.

⁹ 1 Cor. xv. 20.

These words are to be understood of that perfect resurrection by which we are raised to everlasting life, and are no longer subject to the necessity of dying any more. It is in this sense that Christ our Lord holds the first rank. If we speak of the resurrection as meaning restoration to life, with the necessity still remaining of dying again, then many others were raised from the dead before Christ ; yet they one and all were restored to life on the condition that they were to die again. But Christ our Lord so arose from the dead and so subdued and conquered death, that He could die no more. This is stated in the clearest possible language by St. Paul : *Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more ; death shall no more have dominion over Him.*¹

III.—THE THIRD DAY

10.—Import of these words. It will be necessary for the pastor to explain the words “ the third day ” to his flock, to prevent them from imagining that our Lord was three whole days in the tomb. But as He lay in the sepulchre one whole day, a part of the previous day, and part of the following day, it is quite right to say that He was three days in the grave, and that He rose from the dead on the third day.

To prove that He was God, He willed not to defer His Resurrection till the end of the world ; while to show us, on the other hand, that He was truly man, and was really and truly dead, He did not rise immediately after His death, but only on the third day—a period quite sufficient to prove the reality of His death.

11.—“ According to the Scriptures,” The Fathers of the first Council of Constanti-
nople added to the fifth article the words “ according to the Scriptures ”—an addition borrowed from the Apostle and inserted in the Creed because of the fact that he had insisted so strongly on the supreme importance of the mystery of the Resurrection : *If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain and your faith foolish ; and if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins.*² St. Augustine, in admiration of the teaching expressed in this article, wrote thus : “ It is not difficult to believe that Christ died—even the pagans, Jews, and the wicked readily believe this. But the test of Christian faith is belief in

¹ Rom. vi. 9.

² 1. Cor. xv. 14.

the Resurrection of Christ—this indeed is something to believe that He rose again.”

• This is why our Lord referred over and over again to His Resurrection—He scarcely ever spoke to His disciples about His Passion without speaking at the same time of His Resurrection. For example: He had said: *The Son of Man shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and He shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon; and after they have scourged Him, they shall put Him to death,*¹ He immediately added: *And the third day He shall rise again.* In the same way when the Jews asked Him to prove His teaching by some sign or miracle, He answered: *A sign shall not be given to them but the sign of Jonas the Prophet; for as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.*²

Now the better to understand the force and meaning of this article we must study and grasp three things—first, why the Resurrection was necessary; second, what was the end and aim of the Resurrection; and third, what the blessings and advantages it confers on us.

IV.—CAUSE, END, AND FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION

(a) As to the first point, it was necessary that
 12.—Causes of the Resurrection. Christ should rise again so as to manifest the justice of God. It was most fitting that He who in obedience to God had been humiliated and loaded with every ignominy, should also be glorified by God. The Apostle, in his letter to the Philippians, gives this very reason: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross; wherefore God also hath exalted Him.*³

(b) His Resurrection, was also necessary to confirm our faith, without which we are not justified. The fact that He rose from the dead by His own power is the most convincing of all proofs that He was the Son of God.

(c) Next, to cherish and sustain our hope. By the very fact that Christ rose again we have a sure hope that we too shall rise again. For the members must of necessity share the fortunes of their head. Such is the conclusion the Apostle would have us derive from his letters to the Corinthians⁴ and Thessalonians;⁵ such also is the reasoning of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles:

¹ Luke xviii. 32.

² Luke xi. 29.

³ Phil. ii. 8.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 12.

⁵ 1 Thess. iv. 12

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, has regenerated us unto a lively hope, through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible.*¹

(d) Lastly, the pastor will show that the Resurrection was necessary to complete the mystery of our salvation and redemption. Christ by His Death freed us from sin—by His Resurrection He restored to us the precious blessings we had lost by sin. Therefore it is that the Apostle says : *He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification.*² That nothing, then, should be wanting to the work of our salvation, it was necessary that as He died, so also should He rise again.

13.—Advantages
of the Resurrec-
tion.

From all these considerations it will be easy to understand the great advantages which the Resurrection of Christ has procured :

(a) In the Resurrection we acknowledge God to be immortal, full of glory, Conqueror over death and hell—all of which we are unhesitatingly to believe and profess with regard to Jesus Christ.

(b) Again, the Resurrection of Christ assures us of our own resurrection, both because it is the efficient cause of that mystery, and because it is the model after which all must rise again. Concerning the resurrection of the body, here is what the Apostle says : *By a man came death, and by a Man resurrection from the dead.*³ So true is this that God made use of the humanity of Christ as an efficient instrument in all that He did to accomplish our redemption. Hence His Resurrection has been, so to say, an instrument to accomplish ours. It may even be regarded as a model of ours, inasmuch as it was the most perfect of all. And as the body of Christ rising again was changed to glory immortal, so also our bodies, though frail and mortal now, shall be restored and clothed with glory and immortality after the Resurrection. So teaches the Apostle : *We wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory.*⁴

The same may be said of a soul that is dead in sin. The Apostle clearly shows how the Resurrection of Christ is proposed as a model to such a soul : *As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life ; for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, in like manner we shall be of His resurrection ;*⁵ and shortly after he adds : *Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him ; for in that He died to sin, He died once ;*

¹ 1 Peter i. 3. ² Rom. iv. 25. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 21. ⁴ Phil. iii. 20. ⁵ Rom. vi. 4, 5.

*but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. So do you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*¹

14.—**Lessons taught by the Resurrection.** From the Resurrection of Christ we should draw two lessons—the first is, that having washed away the stain of sin, we should begin a new life in which should shine rectitude, innocence, holiness, modesty, justice, charity, and humility; the second is, so to persevere in the life thus begun as never, with God's help, to stray from the path of righteousness on which we have once entered.

The Apostle's words, cited just now, not only prove that the Resurrection of Christ is proposed as the model of ours, but they also declare that it enables us to rise again, and that it bestows strength and courage to persevere in holiness and justice, and in the fulfilment of the laws of God. As in His Death we not only have a model of death to sin, but we also derive therefrom strength to die to sin; so His Resurrection enables us to attain to righteousness, and henceforward to serve God in piety and holiness, and persevere in the path of that new life to which we are risen. By His Resurrection Christ our Lord accomplished this especially: that we who had been dead with Him to sin and the world, might also rise again with Him to a new and properly regulated course of life.

15.—**Signs of genuine resurrection from sin.** The Apostle points out the chief indications of this resurrection from sin: In saying: *If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God,*²

he plainly shows that they alone who desire life, honour, repose and riches with Christ in Heaven, are truly risen with Christ. In adding: *Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on earth,*³ he supplies a second mark to enable us to decide whether we are truly risen with Christ. Just as an appetite for food usually indicates health and strength, so also if a man relishes *whatsoever things that are true, whatsoever things are modest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are holy,*⁴ and if in his inmost soul he experiences the sweetness of heavenly things, it is a sure proof that he who is thus disposed is risen with Jesus Christ to a new spiritual life.

¹ Rom. vi. 9-11.² Col. iii. 1.³ Col. iii. 2.⁴ Phil. iv. 8.

THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

THE FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught in the Fifth Article: "He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead"?

A. The Fifth Article of the *Creed* teaches us that the Soul of Jesus Christ, on being separated from His Body, descended to the Limbo of the holy Fathers, and that on the third day it became united once more to His Body, never to be parted from it again.

Q. What is here meant by *hell*?

A. *Hell* here means the Limbo of the holy Fathers, that is, the place where the souls of the just were detained, in expectation of redemption through Jesus Christ.

Q. Why were not the souls of the holy Fathers admitted into heaven before the death of Jesus Christ?

A. The souls of the holy Fathers were not admitted into heaven

before the death of Jesus Christ, because heaven was closed by the sin of Adam, and it was but fitting that Jesus Christ, who re-opened it by His death, should be the first to enter it.

Q. Why did Jesus Christ defer His own resurrection until the third day?

A. Jesus Christ deferred His own resurrection until the third day to show clearly that He was really dead.

Q. Was the resurrection of Jesus Christ like the resurrection of other men who had been raised from the dead?

A. No, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not like the resurrection of other men who had been raised from the dead, because He rose by His own power, while the others were raised by the power of God.

Twenty-first Instruction on the Creed

THE DESCENT INTO HELL AND THE RESURRECTION

THE preceding article tells us of our Saviour's humiliations and ignominies; the fifth article begins the series of His glories and triumphs. It comprises two parts; we begin with the first part, that is to say, the descent of Jesus Christ into hell.

Just as faith teaches that the death of Jesus Christ was true and real, so also we cannot doubt that in His death His soul was really separated from His body. We have seen that, after His death, His body was laid in the sepulchre; but what became of His soul? Where did it remain while separated from the body? His soul, always united to His divinity, which was never separated from it any more than from His body, descended into hell, and there remained as long as His body lay lifeless and cold in the tomb.

What is here meant by the word *hell*? This is the first point to be explained. The word *hell* generally signifies any inferior place, situated under us in the bowels of the earth. But here it means precisely those subterraneous abodes wherein souls deprived of the happiness of heaven are detained. But as the condition of all these souls is not the same, so in the same way the places destined to receive them are not all the same. The Roman Catechism distinguishes three such places:—

(a) The first and deepest of all is that in which the souls of the damned suffer, and shall for ever suffer. Sacred Scripture calls it the *place of torments*—hell, in the strict sense of the word.

(b) The second is Purgatory, where are detained for some time the souls of those who do indeed die in a state of grace, but who are yet stained by a venial stain, not yet forgiven, or who still owe to Divine Justice some temporal punishment on account of the sins, mortal or venial, that have indeed been pardoned, but not completely expiated in this life.

(c) The third is that in which dwelt the souls of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the just who died before the coming of Jesus Christ. Though they had nothing to satisfy for, yet they could not be admitted

into heaven until Jesus Christ had, by His Death and Ascension, re-opened the gates that had been closed by the sin of our first parents ; and therefore it was that they continued in expectation of their redemption, ardently hastening it by the fervour of their desires and prayers. This place is usually known as *Limbo*, and in Sacred Scripture is called *Abraham's bosom*. Thus we read in St. Luke that the soul of the pious mendicant, Lazarus, who in his life had lain at the door of the rich glutton, was carried by the angel into the *bosom of Abraham*, where he was beheld by the same glutton now buried in hell.

This being understood, the question now arises : Into which of these three places did the most holy soul of Jesus descend ? That He really did descend *into hell* is an incontestable truth, expressed in this article, and clearly set forth in Sacred Scripture where Jesus Christ says to His Father, by the mouth of the Psalmist, speaking prophetically in His name : *Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption.*¹ This clearly proves that while the body of the Saviour lay in the sepulchre, His soul was in hell. The point to determine is, in which hell ?

To determine this we must note with St. Thomas that a person can be said to be present in a place in two different ways, that is to say, by the influence of his power, and by his real personal presence. Thus a monarch is said to be present in all his kingdom through the effects of his power, when he proclaims laws, punishes the guilty, bestows favours ; while he is said to be present really and in person in his court or in the city in which he resides. Now, applying this to the question under discussion, it is an article of faith that Jesus Christ really descended in person into Limbo. But faith does not thus assure us that he really descended into the other two places, although it is commonly believed that He did, at least virtually, or by the effects of His power.

We may believe, then, that Jesus Christ descended either really or virtually into the hell of the damned, and that He there made Himself seen and felt as Conqueror over the demons ; as Judge also and stern Avenger of the reprobate, filling them with confusion and terror, in the same way as the presence of an outraged sovereign fills traitors and rebels with confusion and terror. We may also believe that He either really or virtually descended into Purgatory, to bring comfort to the souls of the just by delivering them, or at least shortening the time

¹ Ps. xv. 10.

of their punishment in virtue of the Blood which He had shed so recently. But here also faith tells us nothing definite.

What is certain is, that He really did descend into the Limbo of the just. This truth is based on the unvarying testimony of the Fathers, who are unanimous in interpreting in this sense various passages of Sacred Scripture, especially that of Ecclesiasticus, where, speaking in the name of Jesus Christ, it is said : *I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth, and will behold all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord.*

But why did He descend into Limbo ? He went to console those holy souls with the joyful tidings that the hour of their liberation was at hand. There were to be found our first parents, Adam and Eve, with their son, Abel ; there the illustrious patriarchs for whose sake God had accorded so many favours to His people—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob ; there Moses, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel, with many other prophets richly endowed with heavenly lights ; David was there with Ezechias, Josias, Josaphat, and many other holy kings who had glorified their throne and reign by their fidelity to God ; Judith was there, with Esther, Deborah, Anna the mother of Samuel, Anna the Prophetess, Anna the mother of the Queen of Heaven, and the many other holy women, renowned for their solid piety and sanctity ; Joachim, the father of Mary, was there, and Joseph her spouse, along with John the Baptist the Precursor, and countless other souls who by faith and grace pertained to the new dispensation.

Long had these souls been there—some for several years, some for centuries, some even for thousands of years. True, indeed, they suffered no pain beyond that which comes from hope deferred—from the expectation of a great good, a certain good, but a good still distant and deferred, that is to say, eternal happiness which had been promised them through the merits of the Redeemer. Their one abiding occupation was to long for the coming of the Messiah, whom they ardently implored : *Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy, and grant us Thy salvation ; Come to save us . . . O Lord God of hosts, show Thy face and we shall be saved ; Let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour*—expressions and ejaculations which the Church fittingly makes use of in the offices which precede the feast of the Nativity. Jesus Christ did not delay an instant in going to console them ; immediately after His Death He presented Himself to them, assured them that He had conquered sin, destroyed the empire of Satan, accomplished the great work of Redemption, and that consequently the period of their exile was over. Not that He

at once led them into heaven ; for they could not enter there before His glorious Ascension. But, meanwhile, He brought them out of their prison, and made them sharers in His own happiness by giving them the beatific vision of God, which really constitutes Paradise, as the words of Jesus Christ to the good thief on the cross give us to understand : *To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

Now, the descent of Jesus Christ into hell, bringing as it did unbounded joy to these holy souls, should be to us also a source of consolation. For He opened the doors of that dismal prison, not only to them but also to us—nay, rather, He closed them for ever, so that as far as depends on Him no one enters therein any more. This is the inestimable advantage we enjoy over those who lived and died before the Redemption. Dear though they were to God, pure from every stain though they might be, they yet could not enter into possession of the glory that was destined for them, but had to remain in a state of hard and weary waiting for their promised ransom ; whereas we have no need to await the Redemption—it is accomplished, and the price of our salvation paid. Hence, on this score our glory will not be deferred a single instant after our death ; and if we have the happiness to die free from every stain, so that nothing in us remains to be cleansed, the last instant of our lives will be only the commencement of our eternal bliss.

It has happened thus to many saints whom the Church honours. At the very instant of their passing away, they winged their flight direct and swift from their bed of death to the heavenly mansions, verifying fully the beautiful expression of the Psalmist : *When He shall give sleep to His beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord.* True, not all souls on separation from the body are free from all guilt, from all debt of punishment, from every stain. But this should show us clearly how careful we should be to live in such a way that at our death nothing can defer our possession of God, or at least cannot defer it long. This we can do by applying to ourselves as far as possible here the merits of Jesus Christ, which we can no longer apply to ourselves after death.

And this leads us to another reflection, which will not be out of place. Of the countless souls which in the space of four thousand years had been buried in the abyss of hell, Jesus Christ did not liberate a single one during His descent into Limbo. Those only partook of the fruits of the Redemption who were united to the Passion of the Redeemer by faith enlivened by charity, which excludes all mortal sin. From this we should conclude that if we possess neither charity nor sanctifying grace when death comes to surprise us, there will be

no remedy for us—not even our Saviour, all merciful as He is, will deliver us from hell, Our destiny will be decided, and our unhappy lot irrevocably fixed for all eternity. Now, I repeat, is the time to avail ourselves of the merits of Jesus Christ, and to make good use of them.

And how long did the soul of Jesus Christ remain in Limbo? As long as His body remained in the sepulchre; that is, three incomplete days—a part of Friday, all Saturday, and a part of Sunday. On the morning of the third day, His soul became united once more to His body, never to be separated from it any more, but giving it a glorious and immortal life; and precisely in this reunion of soul and body lies the mystery of the resurrection, referred to in the second part of this article.

Jesus Christ could have risen immediately after His Death; but in this case His Death would not have been accepted as real and true; and if there was any doubt that He was not really dead, it could not be believed that He really rose from the dead. In order, then, to leave no room for doubt as to the truth of His Death, and consequently of His Resurrection, He did not rise till the third day.

Towards morning of the third day—Sunday—His glorious soul came forth from Limbo, sped in an instant to the sepulchre, and resumed His body, which lay stark and cold in the tomb, endowing it with a new life. Returned to life, He came forth from the tomb, without stirring the heavy stone that closed the entrance. This is why the guards placed in charge of the tomb were not at the time conscious of His Resurrection. But they were immediately made aware of it, by a sudden trembling of the earth, and by the presence of an angel descended from heaven with face shining like the sun, and raiment white as snow, who, without the least difficulty, rolled back the stone and sat upon it, casting glances of lightning round about. This spectacle so terrified the guards that they fell to the ground and became as dead men. Such is the story of the mystery of the Resurrection, with all its attendant circumstances, as recorded in the Gospels; we shall, however, have occasion to return to it again.

In the meanwhile, bear well in mind that it was as man that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, because it was as man that He died and was buried; but He rose by virtue of His own Divinity, which from the first instant of His Incarnation was always inseparably united to His body and soul—even during the three days of His death and burial. It is principally this that distinguishes the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from all others. We read in the Old and New Testaments that

many were brought back from death to life ; but it was by the power of God, and consequently we say that they were restored to life ; whereas Jesus Christ arose by His own power, for He had in Himself an unalterable principle of life, that is to say, the Person of the Word perpetually united to the humanity with which He was clothed.

Another very striking difference is this, that others on being restored to life returned to their previous state as men subject to death ; and hence, having lived for a time, they had to die once more. But it was not thus with Jesus Christ—He rose to immortality : *Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more ; death shall no more have dominion over Him.*¹ His body was enriched with the four prerogatives of beatitude—impassibility, immortality, subtlety, brightness. This is why the Fathers could say that Jesus Christ rose all God, because the infirmity of His flesh had completely disappeared, and there remained nothing in Him but the power of the Divinity. Not indeed that His body, in the Resurrection, underwent any essential change—it is the self-same body that was scourged, crucified, buried ; but the Divine power delivered it from all frailty and weakness, and enriched it with divine qualities, so that, though substantially the same as before, it seems as it were transformed and absorbed in God. What a subject for joy and gladness to every Christian soul that truly loves this adorable Saviour, to see Him thus glorified ; and not only living, but beautiful, radiant, majestic, after the cruel tortures of His bitter Passion and Death, which year by year, in the last week of Lent, we recall to mind, and bitterly lament.

But what is of more importance for our edification, is, that this mystery is the surest foundation of our faith—a foundation which of itself suffices thoroughly to establish the Divinity of Christ, and consequently the divinity of the Church which He founded. It is also the great groundwork of our hope—of that joyous hope which the Risen Christ gives us, that we too shall one day rise glorious like Him : *He will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory.*² These two points, however, demand more extensive treatment ; and, accordingly, we shall defer the development of them till our next instruction.

¹ Rom. iv. 9.

² Phil. iii. 21.

Twenty-second Instruction on the Creed

IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

IN the last instruction I explained the mystery of the Resurrection, which we profess in the fifth article of the Creed : *The third day He arose again from the dead.* The mere explanation of that mystery, however, would be but bare and barren did I not furthermore bring into relief its great significance with regard both to Christian faith and hope.

The Resurrection of Christ is, in the first place, the basis and foundation of our religion, so much so that St. Paul did not hesitate to assert that : *If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*¹ For once we are convinced that Christ is the true Son of God, we must, as a necessary consequence, admit that the law He has given us is true, that the mysteries He has revealed are true, that the Gospel He preached is true, that the Church and religion He founded are true ; while, on the other hand, all these vanish into air, if the Divinity of Christ is not clearly established. Now, nothing proves the Divinity of Christ more invincibly than the miracle of His Resurrection, since of all His miracles it is by far the most luminous and palpable. Resurrection from the dead is the greatest of all miracles ; but of all resurrections the most wonderful is that of restoring life to oneself, and of rising by one's own power. None but a God could say, as Jesus Christ said : *I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again.*² Hence the repeated prediction which our Lord made of this miracle. He hardly ever spoke of the ignominies of His Passion without at the same time dwelling on the glories of His Resurrection : *He must be put to death, and the third day rise again.*³

But what is still more remarkable is, that this was precisely the miracle to which Jesus Christ principally appealed when challenged by His enemies to give them some proof of His Divinity. He could have appealed to the wondrous works He had wrought daily under their eyes,—giving sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, health to

¹ Cor. xv. 14.

² John x. 18.

³ Matt. xvi. 21.

the sick,—and in fact He sometimes did so : *The works themselves which I do, give testimony of Me.*¹ But He insisted in a particular manner on the miracle of His Resurrection as being that which should set the seal on all the others, just as if it was the only miracle really conclusive: *This generation asketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it except the sign of Jonas the Prophet ;*² for, just as Jonas remained three days in the whale's belly, and then came forth therefrom, so shall the Son of Man remain closed up three days in the womb of the earth, and shall rise on the third day. Elsewhere, speaking to the Pharisees of *the temple of His body*, He said : *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.*³ It must be admitted that He was thoroughly assured of the result, when He did not fear to speak thus in the face of His enemies.

If, after so precise, formal, and oft-repeated a declaration His Resurrection had not taken place, we should no longer have that direct and absolute proof which Jesus Christ has given us in testimony to His Divinity ; and not unreasonably should we regard Him as a false prophet, an impostor, and refuse Him all credence. But being truly risen at the time marked out by Him, He is truly what He said He was, that is to say, the true Son of God. Now he who believes in the Resurrection of Christ, must as a necessary consequence believe all the articles of the Christian religion.

But is it true that Christ did rise from the dead ? Not only it is an article of faith, but it is at the same time one of the best established facts it is possible to meet ; for it is backed up by the evidence of His very enemies, by the various apparitions of Jesus Christ, by the reluctance of the Apostles themselves to accept it, and by their invincible constancy later on in proclaiming it in the face of the whole world.

(1) *The testimony of His very enemies.*—Unable to ignore the fact that Jesus Christ had foretold His Resurrection, and fearing His disciples should steal and hide the body and then proclaim that their divine Master had arisen, they spared no pains to guard it safely. They first of all made sure of the presence of the body within the sepulchre ; they then closed up the entrance to the tomb with a huge stone, sealed it with the official seal, and stationed a strong guard of soldiers to watch it. But all these precautions served only to render the fact itself more certain and incontestable. Divine Providence ordained that the very soldiers should be irrefragable witnesses of the wonders that were accomplished at the tomb, and which prove up to the hilt

¹ John v. 36.² Luke xi. 29.³ John ii. 19.

the Resurrection of Christ. They were witnesses to the earthquake, and to the sudden opening of the sepulchre, and to the angel sitting on the stone in a terrible and terrifying attitude. Hence, hardly had they recovered from their first terror, which had left them half dead, when they fled to the city, and told in detail to the chief priests what they had seen and heard. That they are unimpeachable witnesses is evident, because they were enemies, because they were many, and, finally, because unanimous in their testimony.

The truth of the Resurrection is luminously confirmed by the ridiculous or contradictory measures taken by the chief priests on learning the news. What shall we do? they said in consternation. If we allow those tidings to spread amongst the people, all will believe that Jesus of Nazareth is God, and will run after Him: *The whole world is gone after Him*; ¹ and we who have crucified Him shall be covered with infamy. Hence they determined to bribe the guards to say and proclaim that while they were asleep the disciples had stolen the body of the Saviour. Foolish and miserable expedient, remarks St. Augustine; for in no tribunal in the world is evidence accepted from persons who were asleep while the fact under enquiry was taking place. If they were asleep, they saw nothing, and could see nothing; if they were not asleep, it was their duty to hinder the theft. In the first case, then, they were guilty of culpable neglect of duty; in the second case they were guilty of culpable connivance; in both one and the other case they deserved to be punished. Yet it does not appear that they were subjected to the least inconvenience, or that the disciples, the alleged thieves, were examined or tried for the theft. Is not this inaction, this indulgence, on the part of the chief priests, towards both soldiers and disciples, a clear proof that they were persuaded of their innocence, and that the pretended theft was nothing more than dust thrown in the eyes of the public?

But the fable may be refuted even still more thoroughly. How could they persuade themselves that all the soldiers were asleep at the same time? how imagine that a huge stone could be raised and moved aside without making enough noise to rouse them from their sleep? how suppose in the disciples, who had shown themselves so weak and timid, the courage to undertake so difficult and dangerous a task? what interest could they have to do so? Either they hoped that Jesus Christ would rise according to His promise, or they did not. If they did, why steal the body? If not, what use would it be? They

¹ John xii. 19.

could hope for no advantage from Him, if He did not arise ; while on the other hand, by circulating a false report of His Resurrection, they were certain to run the risk of prison, torture and death.

From all these circumstances and considerations it is clear as noon-day that there never was fable or invention more absurd and groundless than this.

(2) The next proof of the reality of the Resurrection is derived from the *various apparitions* of Jesus Christ. He appeared first of all on the day of the Resurrection to Mary Magdalen, calling her by her name : *Mary* ; next to the other women who had come to the sepulchre to embalm the body ; then to St. Peter ; then to the disciples on the way to Emmaus ; then to all the disciples together ; and finally to more than five hundred disciples in the same place.¹ He did not rest satisfied with allowing Himself to be seen at random and secretly, once or twice, for in that case there could be ground for suspicion of fraud or deceit ; but during forty days He showed Himself in every possible way, in various places, on several occasions, and at different times : *He showed Himself alive after His Passion by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them.*² He spoke to and remained with His disciples ; He ate and drank with them ; He travelled with them ; and He allowed Himself to be touched and felt by them : *See My hands and feet. Handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have.*³ In the face of evidence such as this, where was the room for error ? If any doubt remained after the first apparition, the second apparition reassured them ; and if even after the second apparition they still hesitated, the third rendered all doubt impossible.

But why, you may ask, did He manifest Himself to the disciples alone ? Why not to Herod, nor to Pilate, nor to the chief priests who had condemned Him ? Surely this would have been His greatest triumph, as well as the greatest humiliation for His enemies.

Even though we could give no reason for His attitude, the Resurrection of Christ would be none the less true, based as it is on so many positive, incontestable proofs. God will always have His own motives, His own ends, which will be ever worthy of His wisdom, though ever so impenetrable to us. In any event, we can always reply that the horrid deicide they had committed, their pride, obstinacy and perfidy, rendered them unworthy of such a favour on the part of Jesus Christ as that He should show them He was risen. This was, doubtless, the reason why He justly abandoned them to their obstinacy

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 6.

² Acts. i. 3.

³ Luke xxiv. 39.

Still, you may insist, by appearing to them He could have convinced them, and confounded their incredulity. But this is far from certain. Indeed it is no empty conjecture to say that probably they would not have yielded; nay, it may even be said that their incredulity would not have been conquered, for if they had resisted the evidence of the many miracles wrought under their eyes, attributing them to art and the intervention of the devil, they would, in all probability, have done the same in case Jesus Christ had appeared to them. Woe to him who will not believe because of malice and perversion of heart! No evidence will convince him.

Be that as it may, we must not forget this great principle, that God in His Providence ought to furnish us with proofs fully sufficient to win our assent to the truth; but that He does not provide of a nature to constrain assent. For, while He wishes our faith to be reasonable, He also wishes it to be meritorious; yet it would not be so, it could not even be called faith, if it were forced by full and complete evidence.

The fact is that faith in the Resurrection was embraced by a great multitude of Jews and Pagans; nay, by the whole world, which became Christian. It was, then, sufficiently established; for if not, how can its opponents explain the fact that a thing altogether incredible was accepted and believed in by everyone? The Apostles, moreover, who were its heralds, were so persuaded and convinced of the truth of it, that they did not hesitate to lay down their lives in defence of it.

(3) And this *courageous and unshaken testimony* rendered by the Apostles to the Resurrection of Christ, is another convincing proof of its truth. For if there ever were persons disinclined to accept it in the beginning, these were assuredly the Apostles:—

Barely had they been able to give credence to His predictions; hence it was that they were exceedingly discouraged by His death—or rather, His death on the Cross had banished from their hearts the little faith they had in His predictions. The report spread by the holy women, who were the first to see Him arisen, was received by them as a dream, an hallucination: *These words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them.*¹ On the first apparition of Jesus Christ in the supper-room the Apostles there assembled were seized with terror, as at the sight of a ghost or spectre. St. Thomas, who was then absent, thought he was being imposed on when the Apostles told him what had

¹ Luke xxiv. 11.

happened ; and he declared he would never believe till he had put his finger into the opening made by the wounds : *Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.*¹ And it was consequently necessary for our Lord to appear again to afford him the proof he sought.

Now, I ask : if in spite of the great unwillingness to believe, which they evinced in the beginning, the Apostles later on became such zealous and ardent preachers of this mystery, that one and all braved every kind of torment, and even death itself, rather than cease to preach it, is this not a clear proof that reliable evidence and the force of truth constrained them to give their assent ? What inconceivable folly would it not be to throw away their lives in order to deceive others by supporting a mere impostor ?

From all these proofs it clearly follows that the Resurrection of Christ is a fact, an incontestable truth. Now, once this truth is well established, the Divinity of Jesus Christ is thereby also established, and consequently the Divinity of the Christian Religion, which acknowledges Him as its Author and Founder. Our faith, then, is not vain, nor our preaching foolish.

Possibly you might have been spared some of these proofs ; but they seem to be called for by the spirit of unbelief that is only too widespread in our days ; and in any event, as regards those here present who cannot be suspected of being unbelievers, the proofs thus set forth will serve to render our religion even dearer and more worthy of respect, seeing the solid and unshaken foundations on which it is based. Let us, then, repeat exultingly and joyously : " Christ is arisen—our faith is not vain."

Now that we have considered the Resurrection of Christ as the most solid groundwork of our faith, let us next consider it as the strongest support of our hope—that hope which has for its object our own resurrection.

The sin of Adam had doubly injured us—both in soul and in body ; in soul, by depriving it of its spiritual life of grace ; in body, by subjecting it to the fatal law of death. To extricate us from these misfortunes, was the mission of our Divine Redeemer, who came *to seek and to save that which was lost.*² There, on Calvary, He delivered us from the first misfortune, by wiping out our sins in His own Divine Blood, and restoring our souls to the life of grace.

¹ John xx. 25,

² Luke xix. 10.

To redeem us completely, all that remained for Him to do was to deliver us from the death of the body, not indeed by exempting us from death—He even willed to subject Himself to it—but by depriving death of the dominion it had usurped, and by enabling us to rise one day from the grave. This He accomplished, precisely in that happy moment when He came forth radiant from the tomb, a triumphant conqueror over death, both in His own regard and in ours. And as a result of this, St. Paul remarks, just as all men die in the first earthly Adam, so in the second heavenly Adam all shall come to life again : *By a man came death, and by a Man the resurrection of the dead ; and as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.*¹

It is important, however, in this resurrection to distinguish between the object of our faith and that of our hope. That every child of Adam is to rise to a new life from the ashes of the grave, is an article of faith, expressed in the eleventh article of the Creed. It is to this truth that St. Paul referred when he said : *We shall all indeed rise again ;*² and drew an invincible proof of this from the very Resurrection of Christ : *If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again.*³ But that our bodies should rise glorious, like to the glorified body of Jesus Christ—this is the object of our hope which, as far as Jesus Christ is concerned, has a pledge for its sure accomplishment, but which demands on our part the fulfilment of a condition which we should never dream of refusing.

How powerful is not this hope in sustaining us amidst the ills, the infirmities and the trials of the present life, and, above all, in fortifying us against the natural terrors of death. We cannot think without dread on that fearful dissolution which death and the grave will accomplish in those bodies that are now so dear to us. But blessed be Jesus Christ, who, rising glorious from the dead, has given us a pledge and an earnest that we shall one day resume those bodies which are now so weak and contemptible, and which shall be afterwards reduced to dust, and that we shall resume them transformed, like that of Jesus Christ, and rendered impassible, radiant, resplendent : *He will reform the body of our lowliness made like to the body of His glory.* It was this hope that strengthened holy Job in his misery as he lay covered with wounds on his dung-hill ; that buoyed up the seven Machabees and their mother in the face of torments and death ; that strengthened the martyrs of the Catholic Church, and made them holily prodigal of their lives. And should it not lead us to sacrifices infinitely less costly ?

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 21.² 1 Cor. xv. 51.³ 1 Cor. xv. 13.

It but now remains for us to stir ourselves up by the consideration of the great blessing in store for us, and generously to fulfil the condition demanded of us. And what is this condition? Here it is—a necessary, indispensable condition: *If we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.*¹ To share in the glorious Resurrection of Christ, we must first share in His sufferings—we must first carry in us the impress of Jesus Christ suffering, if we wish in the end to bear that of Jesus Christ glorified. That is to say, we must here crucify our flesh, with its concupiscences, and make our bodies serve, not to sin, but to justice and holiness. It is on this condition, and no other, that we may hope for the happiness of sharing in the Resurrection of Christ.

And which of us does not envy the glory of the risen Christ? Who does not desire it for himself? But, vain are our desires if we are not now willing to die to sin, and to rise with Jesus Christ to a new spiritual life; if we are ever ready to cherish the body, to satisfy its unregulated affections and give way to its vicious inclinations. In that case we shall indeed arise, but to an ill-starred resurrection, which shall be but the beginning of an unending, agonizing, death in hell. Oh, let us think well on it now while there is yet time.

Let the thought of our future happy resurrection, modelled on that of Jesus Christ, encourage us and stimulate us to walk courageously in the holy fear of God, to hold the body subject to the spirit, and unwaveringly to tread the way of Christian mortification. True, indeed, all this weighs heavily on nature now, but in that great day, when our souls shall be re-united to our glorified bodies, how shall we not bless these few days passed in recollection, abstinence, mortification, penance, when we see our sufferings, of which but a vague memory will remain, changed into an inexhaustible source of joy and glory! Let us keep unfailingly before our eyes that great day which is certain to come, which awaits us all; let us thus prevent ourselves from being conquered by our natural waywardness, and at all cost secure our supreme happiness both of soul and body.

¹ Rom. v. iii. 17,

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIXTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF
GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

1.—The Pastor's duty in this respect. THE Prophet David, filled with the spirit of God, and contemplating the blessed and glorious Ascension, calls on all men to celebrate our Lord's triumph with the liveliest transports of joy: *Clap your hands, all ye nations; shout unto God with the voice of joy! God is ascended with jubilee, and the Lord with the sound of trumpet.*¹ From these words the pastor will understand that he must carefully explain this mystery, and that he must take considerable pains to see that his flock not only perceive it with faith and understanding, but that they also endeavour, as far as possible, with God's help, to reflect it in their lives and actions.

In our explanation of the sixth article, which chiefly concerns the mystery of the Ascension, we shall begin by considering the first part and explaining its sense and import.

I.—HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

2.—Meaning of the first part of the Article. The faithful, then, must unhesitatingly believe that Jesus Christ, having accomplished and perfected the work of our Redemption, ascended body and soul into heaven as man; for, as God, He was never absent from heaven, filling, as He does, all places with His Divinity.

The pastor will also explain that He ascended by His own power, and not by another's, as did Elias, who was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot; or the Prophet Habacuc; or Philip the Deacon; who were borne through the air for a considerable distance by Divine power. Nor was it solely as God and by the mighty power of His Divinity, that He ascended into

¹ Ps. xlv. 2,

heaven, but also as man. Though, this could be done by no natural power, yet that virtue with which His holy soul was endowed could carry the body as it pleased—and the body, now glorified as it was, readily obeyed the will of the soul that animated it.

This is why we believe that Christ ascended into heaven as God and man, by His own power.

II.—SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

In these words we observe a figure of speech, that is to say, a change of meaning, by no means unfrequent in Holy Scripture, attributing human affections and corporeal parts to God, so as to render the matter more intelligible to our understanding. God, being a spirit, there can be nothing corporeal in Him. But as in human society we consider that he is more honoured who is placed at the right hand, so in like manner we apply this notion to heavenly things, and, to bring into relief the glory which Christ as man has obtained beyond all others, we say that He sits at the right hand of the Father.

To sit, however, does not here mean posture and position of body—it denotes the firm and sure possession of sovereign power and glory which Christ has received from the Father. On this point the Apostle thus speaks : *Raising Him up from the dead, and setting Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and He hath put all things under His feet*¹—words which clearly indicate that this glory belongs to our Lord so peculiarly and exclusively that it is applicable to no other created being ; and hence the same Apostle elsewhere asks : *To which of the angels said He at any time : Sit on My right hand* ?²

The pastor should explain the sense of this article at greater length by following the orderly narrative recorded by the Evangelist St. Luke ; in the Acts of the Apostles ; and in his explanation he will first of all point out that all the other mysteries of our Lord are referred to the Ascension as to their end, and in it find their perfection and completion.

4.—The Ascension is the perfection and completion of all the other mysteries.

¹ Eph. i. 20.

² Heb. i. 13.

As it is from the Incarnation of our Lord that all the mysteries of our religion have their beginning, so did His sojourn amongst us terminate with the Ascension.

The other articles of the Creed relating to Christ our Lord set forth His exceeding humility and lowliness; and surely nothing more abject and lowly can be conceived than that the Son of Man, for our sake, should assume our weak human nature, and will to suffer and die. But on the other hand, to denote His supreme glory and Divine majesty nothing more magnificent and glorious can be said than that which is contained in this and the preceding article—that He rose from the dead, that He ascended into heaven, and that He sits at the right hand of God the Father.

III.—CAUSES AND MOTIVES OF THE ASCENSION

5.—Reasons for the Ascension. Having explained all this, the pastor will carefully point out why Christ ascended into heaven :—

(a) First of all, He ascended because the high and glorious dome of heaven alone, and not our obscure and earthly habitation, offered a fitting dwelling-place for that body which, in the Resurrection, had been clothed with the glory of immortality

But it was not only to take possession of the throne of His glory and of His kingdom, which He had merited by His blood, but also to take care of all that concerns our salvation, that He ascended into heaven.

(b) Next, He ascended to prove by His Ascension that *His kingdom was not of this world*.¹ The kingdoms of the world are earthly and fleeting, and are supported by riches and the power of man; but the kingdom of Christ is not, as the Jews expected, earthly, but spiritual and eternal. Well, indeed, has He shown that His riches and wealth are purely spiritual, by placing His throne in heaven—in that kingdom where those are counted richer and wealthier in all good gifts who are more diligent in seeking the things that are of God. St. James testifies that God has chosen : *The poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God had promised to them that love Him*.²

(c) Our Lord also by His Ascension into heaven desires to encourage us to follow after Him in mind and heart. As by His Death and Resurrection He had left us an example of dying

¹ John xviii. 36.

² James ii. 5.

and rising again in spirit, so also by His Ascension He teaches and instructs us that, though dwelling here on earth, we should transport ourselves in spirit to heaven, and confess, with St. Paul, that we are *pilgrims and strangers on earth*,¹ and that we are *fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God*.² Our conversation, as the same Apostle says, is in heaven.³

6.—Blessings re-
dounding from
the Ascension. (d) The inspired David had (as the Apostle interpreted him) long before sung of the unutterable blessings poured out on us by this mystery: *Ascending on high, He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men*.⁴ And truly, on the tenth day He sent the Holy Spirit, with whose power and abundance He filled the multitude of the faithful then present, thus fulfilling His own glorious promise: *It is expedient for you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but If I go I will send Him to you*.⁵

(e) He also ascended into heaven, according to the Apostle, that *He may appear in the presence of God for us*,⁶ and discharge the office of our Advocate with the Father. *My little children, writes St. John, these things I write to you, that you may not sin; but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just; and He is the propitiation for our sins*.⁷ Now there is nothing more calculated to inspire the faithful with greater joy and comfort of soul than the reflection that our Advocate and Mediator is Jesus Christ, whose influence and authority with the eternal Father are supreme.

(f) Lastly, He went, as He had promised, *to prepare a place*⁸ for us; and in our name and as our Head He entered into possession of celestial glory. Ascending into heaven, He threw open to us the gates that had been closed by the sin of Adam, and, as He had foretold to His disciples at the Last Supper, He opened a path by which we may attain to eternal happiness. To prove this by a striking fact, He led with Him into the regions of eternal bliss the souls of the just whom He had delivered out of hell.

7.—Further ad-
vantages of the
Ascension. A long series of other advantages must be linked with this wonderful outpouring of heavenly gifts:—

(a) In the first place an immense increase was added to the merit of our faith. Faith regards things we do not see, and

¹ Heb. xi. 13. ² Eph. ii. 19. ³ Phil. iii. 20. ⁴ Ps. lxxvii. 19; Eph. iv. 8.
⁵ John xvi. 7. ⁶ Heb. ix. 24. ⁷ 1 John ii. 1. ⁸ John xiv. 2.

which are beyond the ken of human reason and intelligence. If, therefore, the Lord had not left the earth the merit of our faith would be lessened, since He Himself has proclaimed that those are *blessed who have not seen and have believed*.¹

(b) In the second place, Christ's Ascension into heaven contributes much to confirm hope in our hearts. Believing, as we do, that Christ as man ascended into heaven and placed human nature at the right hand of God the Father, we have a powerful motive for hoping that we, who are His members, shall ascend thither also, and be there reunited with our Head, as He Himself testified : *Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me*.²

(c) And lastly, one of the most important advantages we have acquired by the Ascension is that He has raised the affections of our hearts to heaven, and inflamed them with the fire of the Divine Spirit ; for most true is that saying : *Where the treasure is, there is the heart also*.³

8.—It would not be advantageous to us that Christ should remain on earth. In truth, had Christ our Lord continued to remain on earth, all our thoughts would be centred on seeing Him in His humanity, and living in His company ; we should be inclined to regard Him only as that man who loaded us with great blessings, and cherish Him with an affection that would be more or less earthly. But by His Ascension into heaven He has spiritualized our affection and has enabled us to love and venerate as God Him who, because of His absence, we can see only in spirit.

We gather this partly from the example of the Apostles, who, while our Lord was in their midst, seemed to regard Him almost in a human light ; and partly from the confirmatory testimony of our Lord Himself : *It is expedient for you that I go*⁴—the imperfect love they had for Him while still present amongst them, had to be perfected by Divine love, that is, through the coming of the Holy Ghost. Hence it was that He immediately adds : *If I go not the Paraclete will not come to you*.⁵

9.—Advantages to the Church in general. To all this we may add that by His Ascension He expanded His household on earth—the Church—which was to be governed by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. To represent Him, He left Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, as its pastor and Chief

¹ John xx. 29.² John xvii. 24.³ Matt. vi. 21.⁴ John xvi. 7.⁵ John xvi. 7.

Bishop on earth ; and, moreover : *Some indeed He gave to be Apostles, and some Prophets, and others Evangelists, and others Pastors and Teachers ;*¹ and thus from His place at the right hand of God the Father He distributes His various gifts to every class of person, as St. Paul testifies : *To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*²

Finally, all that we have explained in reference to His Death and Resurrection is equally true of His Ascension, as should be pointed out to the faithful. And in fact, though we are indebted for our salvation and redemption to the Passion of our Saviour, and though His merits have opened heaven to the just, yet His Ascension is not only proposed to us as a model, teaching us to lift up our souls and ascend in spirit into heaven, but it also imparts to us a Divine power which enables us to accomplish what it teaches.

¹ Eph. iv. 11.

² Eph. iv. 7.

THE SIXTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught in the Sixth Article: "He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty"?

A. The Sixth Article of the *Creed* teaches us that Jesus Christ, forty days after His resurrection, ascended of Himself into heaven in the sight of His Apostles; and that, while as God He was equal to His Father in glory, as man He has been raised above all the Angels and Saints, and constituted Lord of all things.

Q. Why did Jesus Christ remain forty days on earth after His resurrection before ascending into heaven?

A. After His resurrection Jesus Christ remained forty days on earth before ascending into heaven, to prove by several apparitions that He was truly risen, to instruct the Apostles still further, and to confirm them in the truths of faith.

Q. Why did Jesus Christ ascend into heaven?

A. Jesus Christ ascended into heaven: (1) To take possession of

the Kingdom He had merited by His death; (2) to prepare the place of our glory, and to be our Mediator and Advocate with the Father; and (3) to send the Holy Ghost upon His Apostles.

Q. Why is it said of Jesus Christ that He ascended, and of His Most Holy Mother that she was assumed, into heaven?

A. It is said of Jesus Christ that He ascended into heaven, and of His Most Holy Mother that she was assumed, because, Jesus Christ, being Man-God, ascended into heaven by His own power; but His Mother, being a creature, even though the greatest of all creatures, was taken up into heaven by the power of God.

Q. Explain the words: "Sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty."

A. The word, *sitteth*, signifies the peaceful possession which Jesus Christ has of His glory; and the words: At the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, denote that He has a place of honour above all creatures.

Twenty-third Instruction on the Creed

THE ASCENSION

THE sixth article of the Creed proposes for our belief the admirable Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven—a mystery completing and crowning the triumph begun by His Resurrection. By His Resurrection He came forth from the tomb, victorious over death and over all the rage of His enemies; not merely alive, but clothed in light and splendour, so much so that the Apostles themselves could hardly recognize Him in His new state. Yet He remained with them for some time, now visible, now hidden, abiding still in this valley of tears. But it was not fitting that His glorified and most holy humanity should remain long here below. Moreover, having finished the work for which He had been sent by His Father, He was now to return to the bosom of the Divinity and enter into possession of the glory He had merited by His labours, humiliations and sufferings. This He did on the day of His glorious Ascension into heaven. We shall accordingly now examine: (1) The circumstances attending the Ascension; (2) the actual state of Christ in heaven; (3) the motives and ends of the Ascension; (4) the chief lessons to be learned from this mystery.

(1) Jesus Christ had two reasons for deferring His Ascension into heaven for forty days: (a) To convince His disciples as perfectly as possible of the truth of His Resurrection—a truth which was to be the foundation and basis of the Christian religion. This He did by various apparitions and by many proofs of such convincing evidence as to change their incredulity and doubt into invincible certainty. (b) To take various measures demanded by the circumstances. It was, in fact, during these forty days that He constituted St. Peter visible head of the Church, and the Apostles the heralds of His Gospel; that He unfolded to them the knowledge of the Scriptures; that He gave them the power to remit sins; and that He laid down many regulations not reported in Sacred Scripture, but faithfully handed down by the Apostles to their successors.

Having made these final arrangements He ascended into heaven; and how? Having assembled His disciples for the last time, He spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and after having assured them of His

assistance, He led them out to Mount Olivet ; and there, stretching forth His hands over them in blessing, He gently lifted Himself from earth in the sight of all, and slowly ascended towards heaven : *While they looked on He was raised up.*¹ They followed Him lovingly with their eyes ; and when He had ascended so far as to be only barely visible, a radiant cloud enveloped Him and cut Him off from their sight. Then Jesus ascended at once into the sublime heights of heaven, and sat at the right hand of God in the fullness of His glory, to the unutterable joy and exultation of the whole court of heaven. Of this we have the testimony of two angels who, descending immediately from on high, appeared to the disciples still standing motionless and with eyes uplifted towards the wondrous sight. The angels told them that Jesus Christ had already entered into heaven, and that He would return to earth only on the day of General Judgment : *Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven ? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going.* Such is the history of the Ascension, as narrated in Sacred Scripture.

A few observations however, are here necessary, for the instruction of the ignorant : (a) That Jesus Christ ascended into heaven *as man*, and not as God. He had no need to ascend as God, since He is everywhere by His immensity. It was the humanity, then, always united to the Divinity, that ascended into heaven, that is, our Lord's soul and body, which were not there before. (b) In the second place, we say that He ascended *into heaven*, not into Paradise ; for the soul of Christ, from the very first instant of His Incarnation, was ever blessed, ever in the enjoyment of the beatific vision, in which Paradise really consists. (c) In the third place, we say that He *ascended*, that is, that He raised Himself up into heaven, not by the help and ministry of some one else, as happened in the case of Enoch, Elias and Habacuc, but by His own power—and that not only in virtue of His Divinity, but also in virtue of His humanity, since His body, now glorified, and therefore endowed with agility, could transfer itself without effort from earth to heaven.

(2) Now, what is the actual position of Jesus Christ in heaven ? It is explained in the following words : *He sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty*—words which must not be understood materially, but in a metaphorical sense, as expressing the sovereign grandeur and supreme dignity to which the most holy humanity of Jesus Christ has been raised. Hence the word *sitteth* does not signify

¹ Acts i. 9.² Acts i. 11.

posture or position of body. Whether Jesus Christ stands or is seated, none know; nor is such knowledge necessary. We say that He sitteth, to denote the happy repose He enjoys in heaven after the trials and labours of His mortal life, and especially the absolute power which has been conferred on Him by His Father over all things as King and Supreme Judge of the living and the dead.

We also say that *He sitteth at the right hand of God*, though we know that God is a pure spirit, infinite and immense, and that consequently He has neither right nor left. But as we are accustomed to regard the right hand as the place of honour, the Creed makes use of this expression to adapt itself to our mode of speech, and to show us that Jesus Christ, even as man, enjoys the same honour, the same glory and the same majesty, as God the Father. True, indeed, human nature is infinitely inferior to the Divine; nevertheless, since Jesus Christ, God and man, is but one Person, He cannot be at the right hand of the Father as God, without at the same time being there as man also.

(3) But what is more important is to know the motives and the ends of Christ's Ascension into heaven. They are two—His own good and our advantage.

(a) *His own good*, that is to say, to enter into possession of that eternal glory which was due to Him—a glory which He had asked of the Father shortly before His death: *I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee.*¹ Glorify Me—give that glory, which I had from all eternity with Thee as Thy consubstantial Son, to My humanity also which I assumed as Man-God forming but one Person. A prayer fully heard, as St. Paul tells us; for, to recompense Him for humbling Himself to death, even the death of the Cross, God exalted Him to supreme grandeur, and in Him manifested His own omnipotent power by raising Him from the dead, setting Him at His right hand, and giving Him sovereign dominion over all creatures in heaven and on earth: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. . . . For which cause God also hath exalted Him.*²

(b) All this is easily understood; but it is not so easy to understand how the Ascension was for our advantage. Would it not rather have been better for us if He had remained visibly on earth? Such, in fact, was the thought of His disciples, who were extremely cast down at

¹ John xvii. 4, 5.

² Phil. ii. 8.

the news of His approaching departure. But Jesus Christ said to them : *It is expedient for you that I go*. And this for three chief reasons :—

(i.) To open to us the gates of heaven. Jesus Christ had indeed merited heaven by His Passion and Death ; but its gates could be opened only at the moment of His own solemn entry. And thus, had He remained among us, these gates would still be closed, and no matter how holy might be our lives, death would not mean our passage to a better life. The glorious martyrs, holy virgins, illustrious confessors, whom the Church has produced, would not yet be shining in the firmament, but would still be detained in the abode of weary waiting, as were the just of the Old Law, whom Jesus Christ led into heaven on the day of His Ascension : *Ascending on high, He led captivity captive*.¹ While as it is, we are certain that if we ourselves put no obstacle in the way, the last moment of our lives shall be the first of our eternal happiness, since by His Ascension Jesus Christ has opened the gates of heaven and acquired for us the right of entering therein without obstacle or delay, as He Himself has declared : *I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am you also may be*.²

(ii.) To send us the Holy Ghost, the Gift of gifts, a gift so necessary that without it the Passion and Death of Christ would be of no avail, since the work of our interior renovation is reserved to the Holy Ghost. But in the designs of Eternal Wisdom, the Holy Ghost was not to be sent till Jesus Christ had been glorified : *If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you*.³ Had Jesus Christ, then, remained with us, the Holy Ghost would not have come ; the whole effect of the mysteries accomplished by Jesus Christ would have remained suspended ; the Church would not have been founded, nor the Gospel preached ; and we should still live on in the darkness of idolatry.

(iii.) To be our Advocate in heaven : *He entered into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us*.⁴ What do we believe Jesus Christ is doing at the right hand of His divine Father ? His presence there is not useless, but infinitely fruitful to us. As He offered Himself on the Cross for us, so He continues to offer Himself in heaven for us, displaying to His divine Father the wounds which He still bears in His glorified body as living and perpetual witnesses of the bitter Passion and Death He suffered for us. He prays without ceasing for us, and through the infinite merit of His Person His prayer

¹ Eph. iv. 8.² John xiv. 2.³ John xvi. 7.⁴ Heb. ix. 24.

is always listened to and favourably heard ; so that in virtue thereof torrents of graces and blessings are unceasingly showered on the earth. And thus Jesus Christ is of greater advantage to us by His mediation in heaven than He would be by His presence on earth ; in the same way as an ambassador is of more use in promoting the interests of his sovereign by residing at a foreign court, than by remaining at home.

This presence and perpetual intercession of Jesus Christ in heaven is the principal foundation of the confidence with which we should approach God : *Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace.*¹ Of ourselves we have nothing capable of moving God in our favour ; but we are rich and more than rich in the merits of Jesus Christ—and God denies nothing to so powerful an intercessor. Hence it is that St. John addressed to the faithful these consoling words : *My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just,*² that is to say, Justice and Holiness itself, and therefore a sovereign propitiation for our sins.

Such, then, are the great advantages derived from the Ascension of Christ ; and hence with good reason could He say : *It is expedient to you that I go.* While on this earth He occupied Himself solely with our salvation, and now that He is in heaven, He thinks only of us, and intercedes unceasingly for us with His Heavenly Father.

(4) But how can His merciful designs be realized in us, if we do not enter practically and efficaciously into the sentiments inspired by this great mystery ? For it is full of instruction and light for us, since it shows us both the goal towards which we should aim, and the road we must travel to reach it.

(a) First and foremost, Jesus Christ by His Ascension into heaven has shown us that we have not here on earth a lasting city, that heaven is our home, and that after having passed a certain number of years here below, we must go to finish our course in heaven. Many and many a time had He taught this truth to His disciples ; but to give them a lesson more convincing than all human speech, He willed that they should actually witness His Ascension : *While they looked on He was raised up.*³ It was precisely at sight of this that they conceived profound contempt for things of earth, and thenceforward had no other desire, no other ambition, than the acquisition of that glory of which their Divine Master had given them a foretaste, by tracing out

¹ Heb. iv. 16.² 1 John ii. 1.³ Acts i. 9.

the way. We, indeed, have not seen Him with our eyes ascending to heaven ; but we know by faith that He is gone there, and that where the Head is, there also is the hope of all the body. All our desires, then, should be turned towards heaven, and have no other aim than the acquisition of that glory which is our last end, and which, in the eternal years to come, is to form our true happiness, a happiness which we vainly seek in things of earth : *Seek the things that are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.*¹ Yet, although we know we are destined to reign eternally with God, we nevertheless live forgetful of that great end, intent solely on the fleeting things of earth, and ardently attached to the goods, the vanities, and the pleasures of a world, in which we neither have nor can have a lasting dwelling. Now, living in this way, thoughtlessly and foolishly, how can we hope to attain the happy end that God has prepared for us ? Oh, you may say, we are not our own enemies so far as not to desire our everlasting happiness. Well and good ; but to desire a certain end, and to be unwilling to take the means necessary to attain it, is a vain and empty desire.

(b) In showing us the goal to which we are to tend, Jesus Christ also indicates the path we must take to attain it. It was not by chance that He willed to ascend from Mount Olivet ; that is, from that mount where He had been accustomed to retire to pray, and which was situated right opposite to Calvary, that other mount which was the theatre of His humiliations and sufferings. He desired thereby to show us that it was necessary to suffer in order to enter into His glory : *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?*² All this indicates that the path to heaven is the path of penance, mortification and the cross. We must not, then, deceive ourselves by expecting to have part in Christ's glory, if we have not first had part in His sufferings. What right have we to claim exemption from them, sinners as we are, when He who was Innocence and Holiness itself was subject to them ? If the glory which He acquired was linked by His heavenly Father to the law of suffering, how much more should it not be so with regard to us ? As often, then, as we look on the image of the Divine Saviour who, bent and weary under the weight of the Cross, wends His sorrowful way to Calvary, let it recall to our minds this great sentence He addresses to us as He shows us His sorrowing countenance : *He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me.*³ Yes, there is no going to heaven but by way of Calvary ; and consequently we must give up that vain pre-

¹ Col. iii. 1.² Luke xxiv. 26.³ Matt. x. 38.

tension, so common amongst Christians, of desiring to find contentment in this life and in the life to come ; of enjoying a species of paradise in this life, and of flattering ourselves that we shall also find it in the next.

But in order not to be cast down and depressed at the sight of suffering, trials and torments represented by the crucifix, let us see what it really means to take up our cross after Jesus. It means, first of all, carefully to discharge our duties—both our general duties as Christians, and the particular duties of our state in life—be they ever so onerous ; it means to repress our unregulated desires, and to mortify our passions ; it means to bear with Christian resignation the tribulations, trials, and inevitable adversities of our present life ; it means, in fine, to hold ourselves aloof from the world's seductive ways. Such is the cross we have to bear after Jesus Christ, and it will suffice to associate us one day with Him in His glory. True, it may seem hard, and assuredly does it demand effort, sacrifice, and even violence on our part. But when all is said, there is here no shedding of blood ; nor are there scourgings, nor crowns of thorns, nor nails, nor crucifixions, nor death, all of which Jesus Christ bore for our sakes. In presence of such an example, what more is there to add ?

Let us, then, by a virtuous and penitent life, assure ourselves of the attainment of that glory which Jesus Christ went to take possession of in our name, no less than in His own : *I go to prepare a place for you.*¹ Let the thought of this glory sustain and strengthen us amidst the trials and tribulations of a life of Christian mortification. Jesus Christ Himself, St. Paul tells us, had no other support than this, that : *Having joy set before him, He endured the Cross.*² In that ocean of suffering and sorrow in which He was shipwrecked and submerged for our sakes, He kept before His mind the glory prepared for Him by the Father ; and the thought so sustained and animated Him that He courageously ascended the slopes of Golgotha to consummate His bitter sacrifice, disregarding even the ignominy and shame of the Cross : *Having joy set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.*

And with what courage will not the consoling and comforting hope of the glory that awaits us, inspire in us also, rendering us victorious over all our vicious inclinations, and capable of all sacrifices ? When the devil tempts us, when the flesh entices us, when the world allures us, when tribulations and crosses press heavily on us, let us

¹ John xiv. 2.

² Heb. xii. 2.

look up to heaven, let us think on that reward which for all eternity will perfectly satisfy all our desires, and let us unceasingly repeat within ourselves : The hour of our joy is not yet come ; let us suffer a little longer ; let us not quail before abstinence and privation, derision and mockery, opposition and persecution : *Having set joy before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.*

Happy shall we be if we are always on our guard against our natural disinclination to sufferings ; if we know how to defend ourselves against the deceitful inclinations of our heart, that impel us to seek after the enjoyments of this world ; if, in a word, we unflinchingly embrace the Cross of Christ. If so, when our last hour shall have come, we too shall be able to address to God with humble confidence the same prayer as Jesus Christ Himself poured forth : *I have glorified Thee upon earth ; I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do.*¹ “ Oh, Lord, I have endeavoured during the brief course of my life to glorify Thee, to do Thy holy will, as far as in me lay in the sphere assigned me. I had, it is true, to suffer much, to combat, to conquer myself, to mortify myself ; but thanks to Thy holy help, I overcame all, and now all is over, all has passed like a dream. Now I feel myself animated by Thee to look to Thy mercy and goodness for the reward and the recompense : *And now glorify Thou me, O Father.*” Oh, let us live so as to be able to close our lives thus, with hearts buoyed up with heavenly hope like this. This hope will be a sure pledge, the anticipation of that eternal happiness, to the possession of which we shall then feel that God is really calling us.

¹ John xvii. 4:

CHAPTER IX

THE SEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND
THE DEAD

1.—Purpose of this Article. THERE are three great offices and functions held by our Lord Jesus Christ for the adorning and ennobling of His Church—that of Redeemer, of Advocate, and of Judge. In the preceding articles we have shown that He has redeemed mankind by His Passion and Death, and that by His Ascension into heaven He has undertaken for ever the office of our Patron and Advocate. It now remains but to speak of His office as Judge in this article, the sense and import of which comes to this, that on the last day Christ our Lord is to judge the whole human race.

I.—CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT

2.—The Twofold Coming of Christ. Sacred Scripture mentions two comings of the Son of God—the first, when, to save us, He took flesh and was made man in the Virgin's womb; the second, when, at the end of the world, He shall come to judge all men. This last coming is called in Holy Writ: *The day of the Lord*; St. Paul refers to it thus: *The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night*;¹ while our Saviour Himself says: *But of that day and hour no one knoweth*.²

To prove the reality of the last judgment, it is enough to cite the authority of St. Paul: *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil*.³ Sacred Scripture is full of passages which will easily occur to the pastor not only to prove the fact itself but to picture it to the eyes of

¹ 1 Thess. v. 2.

² Matt. xxiv. 36.

³ 2 Cor. v. 10.

the people. And if that "day of the Lord" wherein He was made flesh had ever been eagerly looked forward to by all men from the very beginning, because they placed the hope of their liberation in that mystery, so in like manner, since the Death and Ascension of the Son of God, we should most earnestly look forward to that other "day of the Lord," *waiting for the blessed hope and the coming of the glory of the great God.*¹

II.—TWO JUDGMENTS: PARTICULAR AND GENERAL

3.—**Twofold Judgment.** In his explanation of this article, the pastor will be careful to point out that there are two different occasions when each one must appear in the presence of the Lord, to render a strict account for every thought and word and deed, and there and then to hear the sentence of his Judge.

The first takes place immediately after death. At that instant each one is brought before the judgment-seat of God, where strict investigation is made into his every act, and word, and thought of his whole life. This is called the particular judgment.

The second shall be held when, on the same day and in the same place, all men shall appear together before the judgment-seat of their Judge, so that in the sight and hearing of the whole human race, each one may learn his final lot and sentence. The very announcement of this sentence shall not be the least part of the pains and punishment of the wicked; and on the other hand the good and just shall derive no small reward and consolation from the fact that each one's real character in life will then be made clear and manifest. This is called the General Judgment.

III.—REASONS FOR THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

4.—**The necessity of a General Judgment.** Concerning the general judgment, it will be necessary to show why, in addition to the particular judgment of each individual, another must be faced by all men together.

(a) When men are dying they sometimes leave others behind them who follow in their steps—children who imitate their parents; dependents and followers who—admire and advocate their example, conversation and actions. By all these the

¹ Titus ii. 13.

rewards or punishments meted out to the dead must necessarily be increased ; and since such good or bad influence, which affects the conduct of so many, can come to an end only with the end of the world, justice demands that a full and perfect enquiry be made into all that is deserving of praise or blame in word and work. Now this could not be done without one general judgment of all men.

(b) Besides, as the fair fame of the good is often injured, while the wicked are commended as innocent, God's justice demands that the just and good should recover, even in the public assembly and judgment of all mankind, the fair fame they were unjustly deprived of in the eyes of men.

(c) Again, since both good and bad did what they did in life not without the co-operation of their bodies, it follows as a matter of course that their good and bad deeds belong also to their bodies, which were the instruments of those actions. It was, then, highly fitting that the due reward of glory or punishment should be meted out to both body and soul together ; now this could not come to pass without the resurrection and consequent general judgment of all men.

(d) Lastly, it was necessary to show that in human prosperity and adversity, which equally attend the good and the wicked alike, everything is done and directed by the infinite wisdom and justice of God ; and hence it was fitting not only that rewards should be appointed for the good, and punishment for the wicked in the life to come, but also that these awards should be made in a public and general judgment, so as to be better known and evident to each and all, and that praise might be rendered to the justice and providence of God, in atonement for that unjust complaint which even the saints themselves, as men, sometimes indulged in when they saw the wicked prospering in wealth, and abounding in honours. Thus the Prophet says : *My feet were almost moved, my steps had well-nigh slipped ; because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners ;*¹ and a little further on : *Behold these are sinners, and yet abounding in the world they have obtained riches ; and I said : Then have I in vain justified my heart, and washed my hands among the innocent ; and I have been scourged all the day ; and my chastisement hath been in the morning.* This being a frequent and common cause of complaint, it was necessary that there should be a general judgment, lest men should be tempted to say that God takes care of " the poles of heaven " but

¹ Ps. lxxii. 2.

is indifferent to things of earth.¹ Justly, then, is this truth made one of the twelve articles of our faith, so that even should the minds of any waver with regard to the justice and providence of God, they might be reassured by this doctrine.

As well as this, it was right that the good should be encouraged, and the wicked terrified, by the thought of the judgment before them—that remembering the justice of God, the good should not be cast down, and that the wicked, through fear and expectation of eternal punishment, might be recalled from their evil ways. Hence, our Lord and Saviour, speaking of the last day, declared that one day there will be a general judgment, and described the signs of its approach, so that when we shall see those signs come to pass, we shall know that the end of the world is at hand. Finally, on ascending into heaven, the Apostles were saddened at His departure and He sent angels to comfort them, who said : *This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, so shall He come as you have seen Him going into heaven.*²

IV.—WHY JESUS CHRIST WILL BE JUDGE

5.—Jesus is Judge according to both natures. That this judgment is assigned to Jesus Christ not only as God, but also as man, is clear from Holy Writ. Though the power of judging is common to all the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, yet it is specially attributed to the Second Person, because of the fact that wisdom is also specially attributed to Him. That as man He will judge the world, He Himself has assured us : *As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son also to have life in Himself ; and He hath given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man.*³

6.—Why as Man. It was most fitting that this judgment should be exercised by Christ our Lord. Since it concerns men, these men ought to see their Judge with their eyes, and hear the sentence with their ears, and learn their final lot through the medium of their senses. Most just was it also that He who was condemned by the most unjust of human sentences, should Himself in His turn be seen by all men, sitting as Judge of all. It was for this reason, that when the Prince of the Apostles had expounded in the house of Cornelius the principal truths of Christian doctrine, and had taught that Christ had been nailed to a tree by the Jews, had died, and had arisen the third day,

¹ Job xxii. 14.

² Acts i. 11.

³ John v. 26.

he added : *And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that He it is who hath been appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.*¹

V.—CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

7.—Signs pre-
ceding it. Holy Writ declares that three great signs are to precede the judgment. These are : The preaching of the Gospel throughout the world ; a falling away from the faith ; and Antichrist. Our Lord says : *This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come ;*² and the Apostle warns us not to be deceived by any : *As if the day of the Lord were at hand ; for unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, judgment will not take place.*³

8.—The sentence. As regards the form and nature of the judgment the pastor will easily find all that is needed in the oracles of Daniel and the teachings of the Evangelists and the Apostles. But the sentence to be pronounced by the Judge should be here set forth with more than ordinary care.

Christ, our Lord, turning with joyful eyes towards the just, standing at His right hand, shall say to them with heavenly sweetness : *Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*⁴—Nothing more sweet than these words can ever be uttered, as will be still better understood if we compare with the condemnation of the wicked, and if we reflect that, by those very words, the good and just are called from labour to rest, from this valley of tears to joy unbounded, from all their miseries to that unending happiness merited by their good works.

9.—Fate of the
wicked. Then, turning to those on His left hand, He shall let His justice burst forth on them thus : *Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.*⁵

The first words, *depart from me*, express that terrible punishment which shall fall on the wicked—that of being cut off and banished from the sight of God, without one ray of hope of

¹ Acts x. 42.

² Matt. xxiv. 14.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 3.

⁴ Matt. xxv. 34.

⁵ Matt. xxv. 41.

ever re-entering into the possession of that great good. This is called the "pain of loss," because the damned in hell shall be deprived for ever of the light of the Beatific Vision. The words, *ye cursed*, that follow, intensify unutterably their misery and calamity. Were they deemed worthy of even the least benediction, when about to be banished from the presence of God, they would experience therein a great consolation. But as they must expect nothing that can alleviate their misery, Divine justice deservedly pursues them with every species of malediction once they have been banished.

10.—The pain of sense and the companionship of the damned. The words that follow: *into everlasting fire*, denote another sort of pain called "pain of sense," because felt by the senses, just like stripes, scourgings, or other more severe chastisements, amongst which, that of fire, beyond all doubt, produces the most intense suffering. And when account is taken of the fact that these torments are to last for ever, it becomes clear and evident that the pain of the damned includes every kind of suffering.

The concluding words, *prepared for the devil and his angels*, make this still more clear. Nature so provides that misfortune affects us more lightly if, in our trouble, we have a companion and partner to cheer us in some measure by advice and sympathy. But what will be the misery of the damned who, in the midst of untold torments, shall never be permitted to separate themselves from the demons of hell? Yet most justly shall this very sentence be pronounced by our Lord and Saviour against the wicked who neglected the works of true piety, who gave neither meat to the hungry nor drink to the thirsty nor shelter to the stranger nor clothing to the naked nor visited the sick and the imprisoned.

11.—Frequent instructions on the Last Judgment. Such, then, are the considerations which the pastor should lay before his flock as frequently as possible; for the truth conveyed in this article will, if faithfully accepted, be of great efficacy in bridling the evil inclinations of the heart, and in deterring men from sin. Hence we read in Ecclesiasticus: *In all thy works remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin.*¹ And assuredly, there is hardly anyone so prone to vice as not to be recalled to the pursuit of virtue by the reflection that he must one day render to an all-just Judge an account, not only of his

¹ Eccclus. vii. 40

deeds and words, but even of his most secret thoughts, and must pay the penalty according to his deserts. On the other hand, the just man will be more and more encouraged to a good life, and even though oppressed by poverty and ignominy and suffering, must be exceedingly gladdened at the thought of that day when, the trials of this vale of tears being ended, he shall, in the hearing of all men, be declared victorious and shall be admitted into his heavenly country, to be crowned with divine honours that can never fade.

It only remains, then, for the pastor to exhort the faithful to lead a good and holy life, and to practise every virtue, that thus they may be enabled to look forward with confidence to the coming of the great day of the Lord,—nay, as becomes children, even desire it with all eagerness.

THE SEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught in the Seventh Article: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead"?

A. The Seventh Article of the *Creed* teaches us that at the end of the world Jesus Christ, in all His glory and majesty, will come from heaven to judge all men, both good and bad, and to give to each of them the reward or the punishment he shall have merited.

Q. If every one has to be judged by Jesus Christ in particular judgment immediately after death, why must all be judged in the general judgment?

A. We must all be judged in the general judgment for several reasons: (1) That God may be glorified; (2) that Jesus Christ may be glorified; (3) that the Saints may be glorified; (4) that the wicked may be confounded; and (5) that along with the soul the body may receive its sentence of reward or punishment.

Q. How will God's glory be manifested in the General Judgment?

A. God's glory will be manifested in the General Judgment in this way, that all shall then know how justly God governs the world,

even though the good are often afflicted and the wicked in prosperity here on earth.

Q. How will the glory of Jesus Christ be manifested in the General Judgment?

A. The glory of Jesus Christ will be manifested in the General Judgment in this way, that He who was unjustly condemned by men, shall then come before the whole world as the Supreme Judge of all.

Q. How will the glory of the Saints be manifested in the General Judgment?

A. The glory of the Saints will be manifested in the General Judgment in this way, that many of them who died despised by the wicked, shall be glorified before the whole world.

Q. How great will be the confusion of the wicked in the General Judgment?

A. In the General Judgment great indeed shall be the confusion of the wicked, especially of those who have oppressed the just and who have tried in this life to be esteemed as men of virtue and goodness; for they shall then see even their most hidden sins laid bare before the whole world.

Twenty-fourth Instruction on the Creed

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. The principal offices filled by Jesus Christ in our regard are three—that of Redeemer, that of Advocate, and that of Judge. The first was discharged by Him throughout the whole course of His mortal life; the second began with His glorious Ascension into heaven, when He took His place at the right hand of the Father, *always living to make intercession for us*; ¹ the third shall be discharged by Him at the end of time, when he will descend visibly from heaven to judge the world; and it is this truth which we profess when we recite the words of the seventh article quoted just now; that is, the second coming of Jesus Christ on earth. Far different from His first coming shall be the second—a coming, no longer undertaken as Saviour with merciful designs for our salvation, but clothed in the character of Sovereign Judge of the universe—no longer clothed in our infirmities, loaded with sorrows and crucified for us, such as we now view Him, but surrounded by glory, encompassed by terror and majesty, and in all the brilliancy of His Divine grandeur.

This truth is one of the first importance, and was in a special manner inculcated by Jesus Christ on the Apostles as one to be proclaimed to the world. Of this infallible truth the sacred pages of the Old and New Testaments are full. The subject is deserving of long and serious meditation; but for the present, at least, we must confine our attention to it in its historic aspect. Accordingly we shall pass in review the chief details of that great event,—we shall consider the Person of the Judge, the time of His coming, the matter and form of the Judgment, which, moreover, must be preceded by another and equally certain judgment. With the latter, however, the present article is not directly concerned.

(1) As regards the person of the *Judge*, we are at once confronted by a difficulty: Why is the power of judging attributed to Jesus Christ? Does not this power pertain essentially to God, and should it not be common to all Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity? Doubtless, it is

¹ Heb. vii. 25.

common to all, but it is specially attributed to Jesus Christ, for two reasons :—

(a) Because to judge is a work of wisdom—and wisdom is the special attribute of the Son, as power of the Father, and goodness of the Holy Ghost.

(b) Because Jesus Christ will judge even as man. This power was given Him by the Father, precisely because He is the Son of man : *He hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of man.*¹ Ponder carefully on this reason, which at first sight might seem surprising. One would have thought that a power of this kind would have been conferred on Him because He is the Son of God. It is easy to see the relation there is between being Son of God and Judge of the world ; but what relation can there be between Judge of the world and Son of man ? The reason, as St. Augustine explains, is clear : If Jesus Christ was but Son of God, He could neither have been accused, nor judged, nor condemned ; but the Son of God, having for love of us deigned to become Son of man also, He was for that very reason treated as a man, subjected to trial, and condemned to the punishment reserved for the vilest malefactors. If, then, He was judged as man, as man shall He come to judge man, when in the sight of all, He shall be seen seated in glory on the supreme tribunal of the universe, and acknowledged for what He really is—the sovereign Lord of all : *It is He who was appointed by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.*²

Now, if the office of Judge shall be most fittingly discharged by Him because of His own claims, that is, in just reward and recompense of His humiliations, it shall be none the less so with respect to man. For it is but right that those who are to be judged should hear and see their Judge ; but countless souls shall be unable to see Him as God, because they shall be reprobate ; hence all that is possible is for them to see Him as man. Moreover, as He became man and laid down His life for us, no one can tax His judgment with undue severity. This is why the judgment is to be preceded by the august sign of our redemption—the standard of the holy Cross ; for this reason also shall it be held in the Valley of Josaphat, near to Jerusalem and Calvary, where He was crucified for us. With such souvenirs and such memorials before our eyes, who can complain of the condemnatory sentence of a Judge who began by being our merciful Saviour ?

(2) *When* shall His coming take place ? At the consummation of

¹ John v. 27.

² Acts x. 42.

time—at the end of the world. When that end is to be, no one knows. Such was the brief, precise, infallible reply made by our Lord to His disciples when they questioned Him on the subject : *Of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone.*¹ Yet our Lord clearly foretold the many wonderful events and signs which are to precede that great day, and from which, as He Himself said, it will be possible to determine when His coming is not far off. These are :—

(a) The universal falling away of nations from the faith ; and the whole earth inundated by vice and abomination, so much so that hardly shall there be found one true worshipper of God.

(b) A dreadful combination of disasters desolating the world—pestilence, and famine, wars and earthquakes.

(c) Multitudes of perverse men—false prophets, rising up to deceive the world, making false use of the name of Christ, and pretending to be the ambassadors of the Lord.

(d) The return to earth of Enoch and Elias ; and the preaching of the Gospel in every part of the world.

(e) The conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith.

When you shall see all these things come to pass, said Jesus to His disciples, for the instruction of posterity, know that the kingdom of God is at hand.

(f) But the nearest sign and the immediate forerunner of His coming will be the upheaval of all nature—the sun eclipsed, the moon darkened, stars falling from their places, and finally a deluge of fire descending from the clouds to consume all earthly things and to renew and purify all that is to remain. In the midst of that tremendous upheaval, all men then living, without a single exception, shall pass away—some by terror, the rest by fire. Consequently when we say that He shall come to judge the living and the dead, the word *living* is to be understood to mean those living the life of grace, to distinguish them from those living a life of sin ; or those who, living their natural life, shall be immediately changed and judged along with all the others.

For, immediately after the dreadful forerunners already mentioned, shall be heard the sound of the trumpet calling the dead to a new life, and gathering all together in the great valley. Then the heavens shall be opened, pouring forth floods of brilliant light, and Jesus Christ, preceded by the Cross, and attended by countless legions

¹Matt. xxiv. 36.

of angels, in all the splendour of His majesty, shall come in person and visibly to judge all men : *They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.*¹

(3) What is to be the *range of this judgment*? Our whole life which, according to the words of Holy Writ, shall be subjected to the scrutiny of God's gaze : *Thou hast set our iniquities before Thy eyes ; our life in the light of Thy countenance.*² All our sins, then, shall be passed in review, no matter when or how or where committed—and not merely our bad deeds, but even every wrong or idle word, nay our every evil thought, desire, intention. Furthermore, we shall be examined regarding the sins we have made others commit in any way whatever : whether by command, suggestion, counsel, permission, or bad example of any kind which may have been to others an occasion of sin. It shall be the same with regard to sins of duty neglected, whether our general duties as Christians, or the particular duties of our state. Still more : the very deeds that we may perhaps have thought good, and which were really so in appearance, but which were internally vitiated and spoiled by some evil end or faulty execution. Finally, all abuse of the gifts of God whether in the order of nature or in the order of grace, such as time, health, riches, talents, learning, warnings, corrections, remorse, light, inspirations, and interior graces of every kind.

All, then, with never an exception, shall be passed in review before Him : *Thou hast set our life in the light of Thy countenance.* Oh, what ample material for judgment! What a countless multitude of sins! And how, we well may ask, can so minute and searching an examination be made into the lives of all men that ever lived, or ever shall live, down to the end of the world? How can it be done? It shall be done in an instant—the Sovereign Judge shall cast around a living, all-penetrating light, which shall render naked and open to all the sins of each one, just as the sun at once lays bare the defects of a crystal when exposed to its rays; so that there shall be no excuse nor justification, but complete and irresistible conviction, followed by insupportable shame and confusion on the part of the reprobate at seeing their lives thus laid bare in sight of the whole world.

This manifestation of consciences having been accomplished, the General Judgment shall be brought to a close by a double sentence—of unending benediction for some and unending malediction for the

¹ Matt. xxiv. 30.

² Ps. lxxxix. 8.

rest; and the sentence shall be at once executed—the reprobate shall be driven despairingly down into the abyss of hell, while the just, happy and triumphant, shall go into the mansions of bliss for ever and ever: *And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting*¹—two terms infinitely different, the importance and import of which we shall examine in the twelfth article of the Creed.

Such is a brief account of that great day with its particular circumstances. It is thus that Jesus has spoken of it; it is thus that He has described it with His own lips and by the lips of His disciples, so that there cannot be the smallest doubt about it. All the other predictions made by Him and of Him have been fully accomplished—His Birth, Passion, Death, Resurrection; the coming of the Holy Ghost; the destruction of Jerusalem; the conversion of the Gentiles; and many other prophecies have been verified to the letter. The only prophecy, says St. Augustine, that remains to be accomplished is that of the General Judgment. But the past is a sure guarantee of the future; and as all the rest has come to pass, so we may not doubt that all that regards the great day of the General Judgment shall one day be infallibly accomplished.

But shall we be judged only at the end of the world? No. Besides the public and solemn Judgment, of which we have been speaking thus far, we must undergo a particular and private judgment, face to face with God alone. In the very moment, in the very place where death overtakes us, a tribunal shall be set up, and before this tribunal our soul, on its separation from the body, shall have to render an account of all its life, and shall hear pronounced on it the sentence irrevocably deciding its lot for all eternity. This, too, is an article of faith: *It is appointed to men once to die, and after this the Judgment.*² In the Creed, however, mention is made of the solemn and general Judgment alone, because in it alone will Christ definitely reveal His supreme authority to the human race there congregated, and will make Himself known before heaven and earth as the Supreme Judge of the living and the dead.

But why institute another Judgment, you will ask, if immediately after death our lot is decided for ever? No absolute, indispensable necessity is apparent, since God could, had He so willed, have otherwise disposed. Yet there are many reasons that go to show the fitness and reasonableness and justice of the General Judgment.

¹ Matt. xxv. 46.

² Heb. ix. 27.

(1) The first, which has been already discussed, affects Jesus Christ, that is to say, the exaltation, the triumph, the glory due to Him in sight of all the earth, which was the scene of His cruellest ignominies.

(2) The second is the honour of God, that is, the complete, luminous justification of His Providence, incessantly blasphemed here below. There always have been and always shall be in the world proud and arrogant spirits who dare to raise up against God, to censure and condemn His ways in the government of the world. Many Christians, too, without being irreligious, are astonished and scandalized at certain things which seem strange to their feeble understanding—the sight, for example, of the goods of this world bestowed so unequally, and, what is worse, the sight of so many good men languishing in misery, while so many of the wicked flourish in triumph. Knowing that all is in the hands of God, and that all depends on Him, they are led to imagine that He has little care for things of earth, and that He governs far from well. It is, then, necessary that God should make known His sovereign wisdom, the justice and holiness of His ways, so that all may render Him the glory that is His due, and may confess that He has done all things wisely: *Thou hast made all things in wisdom.*¹ Now, it is precisely to the day of General Judgment that God has reserved the pleading of His cause, and the vindication of His conduct before the whole world.

(3) Finally, even as regards men, a public assembly such as this is most fitting:—

(a) First, for the greater glory of the just and the greater confusion of the wicked. Here below there are many chosen souls, dear to God, who are neither known nor esteemed by the world, and who are even sometimes persecuted, calumniated, and derided. On the other hand, there are numbers of miserable sinners, who, because they know how to mask and disguise themselves hypocritically, are esteemed and applauded. There is need of a General Judgment, then, to correct and reform all such erroneous impressions—a universal Judgment, which, on the one hand, will reveal the hidden virtues of countless souls, and do honour to many an innocent man so cruelly oppressed on earth; and on the other hand, will strip the mask off the hypocrites, and cover them with shame and confusion.

(b) In the second place, the body, which has been the soul's agent and accomplice in good and evil, ought to have its corresponding

¹ Ps. ciii. 24.

reward or punishment. Now, at death Judgment is passed on the soul and not on the body; and it very often happens that while the soul is condemned, as in the case of the rich glutton, the body is carried to the grave with pomp and splendour; and on the contrary, while the soul is borne by the angels gloriously into heaven, as in the case of Lazarus, the body is ignobly buried without the least mark of distinction. Now, since the body and soul have laboured conjointly to serve God or to offend Him, it is but just that both be judged.

Such, then, are the various solid reasons why, besides the judgment passed on the soul at the moment of death, another public and General Judgment is required at the consummation of the world.

And now, what conclusions are we to draw? These truths are no mere fables but Divine revelations. The truth explained to-day is one of the most terrible articles of our faith, and at the very thought of it the saints and anchorites trembled in their cells and penitential caves. Death, in truth, would not be fearful in itself, if it were not to be followed by Judgment—terrible always and dreadful, be it General or Particular. The Particular Judgment is dreadful, because it decides our eternal lot; the General Judgment is dreadful, because it shall reveal us as we are to the whole world, before an Eternal Judge. It matters little that this General Judgment is as far off as is the end of the world—we must consider it as near as death itself, since it will be only a ratification of the sentence that may be passed on us at any moment, should death come to claim us. What, then, I repeat, are we to conclude?

We do, indeed, profess our belief in this Judgment, and we even assert that we fear it; yet how are we prepared to meet it? What do we do to prepare ourselves? How do our lives correspond with this faith and this fear? With this faith and with this fear we try to combine a life habitually sinful, distracted, careless, unthinking, and hence necessarily full of faults more or less grave. Alas! all men flatter themselves that they shall die a good death, and yet how few there are who strive to live as they ought?

St. Paul teaches us the secret of avoiding in some sort the Judgment of God,—not indeed by refusing to appear, as all must do, before the Judgment-seat: *We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ*¹—but by stripping it of all that can be terrible in it for us. The secret is to forestall, from this day forward, the judgment of God by acting the part of judge against ourselves: *But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*²

¹ 2 Cor. v. 10.

² 1 Cor. xi. 31.

If henceforward we make a strict examination into our life and our faults ; if we make a humble confession of them at the feet of the priest ; if we live in constant vigilance, so as never to commit them any more ; and if in everything we direct our lives, not according to the customs and maxims and prejudices of the world, but according to the law of God—the one and the only standard according to which we are to be judged ; if, in fine, we expiate our faults by voluntary penance and mortification, our lot will be assured, our faults blotted out, and instead of confusion and reproach, we may expect honour and glory as the reward of our vigilance.

But if we take no thought of what is so useful and so necessary ; if we wish to follow the broad road and treat all such things as childishness and folly ; if our conscience is always so embarrassed and confused that we can never reasonably rest satisfied with it ; if we unwisely rely on certain confessions made by routine,—aiming at stifling remorse rather than really effacing our sins—if such is our life, it can hardly happen that we shall have to face an unprovided death, and, with death, the sad occasion of having to give in the presence of God the fearful account of our sins, and to hear fall on our ears the dreadful sound of that sentence which shall pursue us for all eternity : *Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire.*

While time is yet favourable and propitious, then, let us make due provision against that eventful day. Let us from this day forth unite ourselves truly to our merciful Saviour, if we do not wish one day to find in Him a severe and inexorable Judge ; let us strive by a life of penance to give Him that honour which His divine justice will then exact. If His love for us has been infinite, infinite too will be His indignation ; if His mercy has been boundless, boundless also will be His justice. Oh ! what a dreadful thing, cries out St. Paul, to fall unprepared into the hands of the living God ! *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*¹ What, then, are we to do ? If we wish to be saved, we must daily, with sighs and tears, embrace the feet of our Divine Saviour, who is not yet our Judge but our Father, and beseech Him by the bitter sufferings He has endured for us, that before coming to judge us, He will have mercy on us, enlighten us, convert us, and save us, piercing us from this day forward not only in soul, but in flesh and in bone, with a holy fear of His divine judgments : *Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear ; for I am afraid of Thy judgments.*²

¹ Heb. x. 31.² Ps. cxviii. 120.

CHAPTER X

THE EIGHTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST

1.—Necessity of Faith in the Holy Ghost. HITHERTO we have been speaking as far as seemed necessary of the truths pertaining to the First and Second Persons of the Blessed Trinity ; we have now to point out what the Creed teaches regarding the Third Person, that is, the Holy Ghost.

The subject is one on which the pastor should employ all possible care and application ; it is just as inexcusable for a Christian to be ignorant of or to err about this, as it would be in the case of the previous articles. Thus the Apostle would not suffer certain of the Ephesians to remain in ignorance of the Person of the Holy Ghost ; for, when he asked if they had received the Holy Ghost, and was told that they had *not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost*, he at once demanded : *In whom, then, were you baptized ?*¹ thus signifying that a distinct knowledge of this article is altogether necessary to the faithful.

From such knowledge they derive this great fruit, that if they consider attentively that all that they possess is due to the bounty and liberality of the Holy Ghost, they will learn to think more modestly and humbly of themselves, and to place all their hopes in God's protection—and this should be the Christian's first step towards highest wisdom and eternal happiness.

I.—THE PERSON OF THE HOLY GHOST

2.—The Holy Ghost the Third Person. It will be well to begin the explanation of this article by setting forth the force and meaning here attached to the words Holy Ghost. In itself the term is equally true when applied both to the Father

¹ Acts xix, 2.

and the Son (for each is a spirit and holy, and we profess that God is a spirit); and it may also be applied to the angels and the souls of the just. Care, then, must be taken that the faithful are not led into error by the ambiguity of the word.

Hence it must be shown that by the words Holy Ghost we here understand the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity—in which sense it is occasionally used in the Old Testament and frequently in the New. Thus David prays: *Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*¹ In the Book of Wisdom we read: *Who shall know Thy thought except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above;*² and elsewhere: *He created her in the Holy Ghost.*³ In the New Testament also we are commanded to be baptized: *In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;*⁴ and we read that the Blessed Virgin conceived of *the Holy Ghost.*⁵ Finally, we are sent by St. John to Christ, *who baptizes with the Holy Ghost;*⁶ and the word may be found in many other passages as well.

3.—**The Third Person has no proper name.** It need cause no surprise that a proper name has not been given to the Third, as well as to the First and Second Person. For if the Second Person has a proper name and is called Son, it is precisely because, as has been already explained, His eternal origin from the Father is properly called generation. Now, if that origin is called generation, the Person emanating is rightly called, and the Person from whom He emanates is called Father.

But as the production of the Third Person has no proper name, but is simply called Spiration and Procession, it follows that the Person thus produced has no proper name! And His emanation has no proper name, simply because we are compelled to borrow from created things the names we give to God, and we know of no other created means of communicating nature and being than that of generation. Hence we have no proper name to express the manner in which God communicates Himself entire by way of love. This is why the Third Person is called the Holy Spirit—a name, however, which is highly appropriate, since it is He who infuses spiritual life into us, and without His most holy inspiration we can do nothing to merit eternal life.

¹ Ps. l. 13.² Wisdom ix. 17.³ Ecclus. i. 9.⁴ Matt. xxviii. 19.⁵ Matt. i. 20; Luke i. 35.⁶ John i. 33.

4.—The Holy Ghost equal in all things to the Father and the Son. The meaning of the word having been explained, the faithful should in the next place be taught that the Holy Ghost is God, like the Father and the Son, and equal to them in every respect—equally Almighty, equally Eternal, infinitely Perfect, supremely Good, All-wise, in a word, of the same nature as the Father and the Son.

The force of the word *in*, which we employ when we say “I believe in the Holy Ghost,” sufficiently indicates this; for this word is prefixed to the name of each Person of the Blessed Trinity to express the exact nature of our faith.

The clear witness of Holy Writ confirms this truth. Thus, when, in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter says: *Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost?*¹ he immediately adds: *Thou hast not lied to men but to God*—thus giving the name of God to Him whom he had just called the Holy Ghost.

In the same way the Apostle, writing to the Corinthians, explains that it was the Holy Ghost whom he had previously called God: *There are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all,*² and then he adds: *But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as He will.*

Furthermore, in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul ascribes to the Holy Ghost what the prophets attribute to God alone. Thus Isaias had said: *I heard the voice of the Lord saying: Whom shall I send? And He said: Go, and thou shalt say to this people: Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears.*³ Now, in citing these words the Apostle makes this remark: *Well did the Holy Ghost speak to our fathers by the prophet Isaias.*⁴

Again, since Sacred Scripture unites the Person of the Holy Ghost to those of the Father and Son, as for example when it orders the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be used in baptism, no room is left for doubt regarding the truth of this mystery. For if the Father is God and the Son God, we must unhesitatingly admit that the Holy Ghost, who is joined with them in the same degree of honour, is also God.

Moreover, baptism in the name of any created thing is of no effect: *Were you baptized in the name of Paul?*⁵ demanded the Apostle, thus pointing out that such baptism was of no avail

¹ Acts v. 3. ² I Cor. xii. 6, 11.

³ Is. vi. 8.

⁴ Acts xxviii. 25.

⁵ I. Cor. i. 13.

to salvation. Since, then, we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost we must confess that the Holy Ghost is God.

The self-same order of three divine Persons, which proves the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, is also found in the Epistle of St. John: *There are Three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One*,¹ as well as in that noble eulogy of the Holy Trinity, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," with which the divine psalms and canticles conclude.

Finally—what is very much to the point in confirmation of this truth—Holy Writ testifies that whatever attributes belong to God are ascribed equally to the Holy Ghost. Hence Sacred Scripture ascribes the honour of temples to Him. Thus the Apostle asks: *Know you not that your members are temples of the Holy Ghost?*² It likewise attributes to Him the power of sanctifying, vivifying, searching into *the deep things of God*, speaking by the prophets, being present in all places³—all of which can be attributed to God alone.

5.—The Holy Ghost distinct from the other Persons. It must also be carefully explained to the faithful that not only is the Holy Ghost God, but that we must also recognize Him as the Third Person in the Divine Nature, distinct from the Father and the Son, and produced by the will of both. Omitting other passages of Holy Writ, the form of baptism taught by our Saviour clearly shows that the Holy Ghost is the Third Person, subsisting of Himself in the Divine Nature, and distinct from the other Two Persons. The words of the Apostle declare the same thing: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.*⁴

This truth, however, is still more explicitly stated in the addition (to the Creed) made by the Fathers of the First Council of Constantinople, against the impiety and folly of Macedonius. "And (I believe) in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; who spoke by the prophets." In recognizing the Holy Ghost to be Lord, they thereby declare how far He is above the angels, who are the noblest spirits whom God has created, and who, as St. Paul testifies, are all *ministering spirits, sent to minister for those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation.*⁵

¹ 1 John v. 7. ² 1 Cor. vi. 19. ³ 2 Thess. ii. 12; John vi. 64; 1. Cor. ii. 10; 2 Peter i. 21; Wisdom i. 7. ⁴ 2 Cor. xiii. 13. ⁵ Heb. i. 14.

They call Him also the "Giver of life." For as the soul lives more by its union with God, than the body is nurtured and sustained by its union with the soul; and as the Holy Scriptures attribute to the Holy Ghost this union of the soul with God, it is clear that the Holy Ghost is rightly called the "Giver of life."

6.—**Proceeding from the Father and Son.** Concerning the next words, "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son," the faithful should be taught that the Holy Ghost proceeds by an eternal procession from the Father and the Son as from a single principle,—a truth proposed for our belief by the Church's teaching, from which no Christian is free to depart, and confirmed by the authority of Sacred Scripture and the Councils.

Speaking of the Holy Ghost, Christ our Lord has said: *He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine.*¹ It also appears from the fact that in Holy Writ the Holy Ghost is sometimes called *the Spirit of Christ*, sometimes the *Spirit of the Father*;² is said to be sent now by the Father, now by the Son, thus plainly signifying that He proceeds alike from the Father and the Son: *If any man, says St. Paul, have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His*;³ and writing to the Galatians, he calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Christ: *God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying; Abba, Father.*⁴ In St. Matthew, He is called the Spirit of the Father: *It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you*;⁵ and our Lord at the Last Supper said: *When the Paraclete shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me*;⁶ while in another place He affirms that the same Holy Spirit is to be sent by the Father: *whom the Father will send in My Name.*⁷ Taking these expressions to denote the procession of the Holy Ghost, it is clear that He proceeds from both Father and Son.

These, then, are the truths to be taught regarding the Person of the Holy Ghost.

¹ John xvi. 14.² John xiv. 26.³ Rom. viii. 9.⁴ Gal. iv. 6.⁵ Matt. x. 20.⁶ John xv. 26.⁷ John xiv. 26.

II.—SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE HOLY GHOST

7.—Certain effects and gifts specially attributed to the Holy Ghost. Moreover, it will be the pastor's duty to teach that there are certain admirable effects and certain excellent gifts of the Holy Ghost which are said to spring and flow from Him as from a perennial source of goodness. Though the extrinsic operations of the Most Blessed Trinity are common to the Three Persons, yet some of them are more particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost, to signify that they arise from the boundless love of God for us. For, as the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Divine Will, inflamed as it were with love, it is easy to see that the effects specially attributed to the Holy Ghost are the results of God's infinite love towards us.

It is on this account that the Holy Ghost is called a "gift." The word *gift* signifies that which is kindly and gratuitously given, without any expectation of return. We should, then, with sincere and pious gratitude, acknowledge that all the blessings and graces bestowed on us by God—and, as St. Paul asks, *what have we that we have not received* from God?¹—are bestowed on us by the grace and gift of the Holy Ghost.

8.—Effects and gifts of the Holy Ghost. The effects produced by the Holy Ghost are many. Not to mention the creation, the propagation of creatures, and the government of the universe, already discussed in the first article, we have shown just now that to Him is specially attributed the giving of life. This is confirmed by the testimony of Ezechiel: *I will give you spirit and you shall live.*²

Here is how the Prophet Isaias enumerates the principal effects which are specially attributed to the Holy Ghost: *The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord*³—effects usually called the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and to which even the name of Holy Spirit is sometimes given. Wisely, then, does St. Augustine admonish us to be careful, as often as mention is made of the word Holy Ghost in Sacred Scripture, to ascertain whether it signifies the Third Person of the Trinity, or merely His effects and operations. The two are as far apart as the Creator is from His creatures.

All this should be carefully explained, and all the more so inasmuch as it is from these very gifts of the Holy Ghost that

¹ 1. Cor. iv. 7.² Ezech. xxxvii. 6.³ Is. xi. 2.

we derive the rules of a Christian life, and are enabled to know whether the Holy Ghost truly abides in us.

But of all His bountiful gifts, that which we should extol above all others is the grace of justification, which seals us *with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the pledge of our inheritance*;¹ for it is this grace that unites us to God by the closest bonds of love, that inflames us with ardent zeal for piety, and forms us to newness of life, and, *being made partakers of the Divine natures*, enables us to be *called, and really be, the sons of God*.²

¹ Eph. i. 13.

² 2 Peter i. 4 ; 1 John iii. 1.

THE EIGHTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Q. What are we taught in the Eighth Article: "I believe in the Holy Ghost"?

A. The Eighth Article of the *Creed* teaches us that there is a Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity; and that, like the Father and the Son, He is God eternal, infinite, omnipotent, Creator and Lord of all things.

Q. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed?

A. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one Principle, by way of will and love.

Q. If the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, it would seem as if the Father and the Son are prior to the Holy Ghost; how then can it be said that all the Three Persons are eternal?

A. It is said that all the Three Persons are eternal, because the Father has begotten the Son from all eternity, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and from the Son from all eternity.

Q. Why is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity specially designated by the name of the Holy Spirit?

A. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity is specially designated by the name of the Holy Spirit, because He proceeds from the Father and from the Son by way of spiration and of love.

Q. What work is especially attributed to the Holy Ghost?

A. To the Holy Ghost is specially attributed the sanctification of souls.

Q. Do the Father and the Son sanctify us equally with the Holy Ghost?

A. Yes, all the Three Divine Persons equally sanctify us.

Q. If this is so, why is the sanctification of souls specially attributed to the Holy Ghost?

A. The sanctification of souls is specially attributed to the Holy Ghost, because it is a work of love, and the works of love are attributed to the Holy Ghost.

Q. When did the Holy Ghost descend on the Apostles?

A. The Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, that is, fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and ten days after His Ascension.

Q. Where were the Apostles during the ten days preceding Pentecost?

A. The Apostles were gathered together in the Supper Room with the Virgin Mary and the other disciples, and were persevering in prayer in expectation of the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus Christ had promised them to send.

Q. What effects did the Holy Ghost produce in the Apostles?

A. The Holy Ghost confirmed the Apostles in the faith, filled them with light, strength, charity, and an abundance of all His gifts.

Q. Was the Holy Ghost sent for the Apostles alone?

A. The Holy Ghost was sent for the whole Church and for every faithful soul.

Q. What does the Holy Ghost do in the Church?

A. The Holy Ghost gives life to the Church by His grace and by His gifts, as the soul gives life to the body; He establishes in her the Kingdom of truth and of love; and He helps her to lead her children in safety along the way to heaven.

Twenty-fifth Instruction on the Creed

ON THE HOLY GHOST

AT the commencement of the instructions on the Creed, it was pointed out that while there is but one God, in this God there are Three Persons. In connexion with the first article we spoke of the First Person, the Father ; in the six subsequent articles we have dwelt on the Second Person, the Son, considering Him first as God, and then as Man-God ; we now, in the eighth article, proceed to speak of the Third Person, the Holy Ghost, thus entering on the explanation of the third part of the Creed which concerns the foundation of the Catholic Church, as well as the manifold gifts and graces which that Church provides.

It will be well, however, before proceeding further, to glance briefly at the chief truths that have been presented to our consideration in the course of the preceding articles.

We have seen that there exists a God, a Being of beings, essential Being, a Being infinitely great, infinitely good, infinitely just, infinitely wise, a Being who sees all things, who knows all things, who rules over all things, in one word, a Being who is an infinity of times infinitely infinite in His infinite perfections.

We have seen that there is but one God. Sacred Scripture repeats this truth over and over again ; the Church lays it down in the most solemn manner ; reason itself easily demonstrates it—for who can fail to see that to be infinitely powerful means also to be one alone ? Imagine the existence of two beings equally powerful ; yet, be they ever so powerful, it is as clear as noon-day that neither can be all-powerful, for this simple reason that the power of the one is limited by the equal power of the other.

But we do not stop here : We also say that while there is but one God there are in that God three Persons. Reason could never discover this ; but faith comes to our aid and tells us that there are three who give testimony in heaven ; that these three are really distinct ; that each has His own personality—the Father who is begotten of none ; the Son who is begotten of the Father ; and the Holy Ghost proceeding from Father and Son conjointly.

They are Three, equally holy, equally perfect, equally infinite, equally eternal, equally God ; yet there is but one Divine nature, but one Divine substance, but one Divine essence which is simple, whole, and entire in each of the Persons, without division or partition ; and hence, though really distinct, The Three are but one,—one infinite Being, one Divine nature, one God.

Bearing this in mind, we now come to ask the question : What do we mean by the Holy Ghost ? By the Holy Ghost we mean the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, really distinct from the Father and the Son, from whom He proceeds ; in all things equal to the Father and the Son, though proceeding from them ; true and one only God along with the Father and the Son. Let us examine all this in detail, first considering the Holy Ghost as He is in Himself, and then regarding Him in His relation to us.

I. The Holy Ghost is a Person—not a mere abstraction, not a fictitious creation of the mind of man,—neither an attribute of God, nor a manifestation of God, nor an operation of God ; but a real, veritable, subsistent Person, who sees, thinks, speaks, acts, possesses a being of His own, a distinct individuality, a personality, making Him what He is and nothing else.

(1) The first truth to be believed with regard to the Holy Ghost, is that He is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, as is indicated by the Sign of the Cross, by the form used in Baptism, and by the *Glory be to the Father*, etc., which the Church so frequently employs in her prayers. As the name of Father is given to the First Person, and the name of the Son to the Second Person, so the Third Person is distinguished by the name of Holy Ghost. True, indeed, it is that this name can be justly given to the other two Persons as well, because of the fact that the Three Persons are One only God, who is essentially a most holy spirit, and hence the name of Holy Spirit is perfectly applicable to all Three. Even so, however, we usually employ this name to designate the Third Person, and it is the Third Person we understand when we hear the Holy Ghost mentioned.

Now why has not the Third Person a proper name, exclusively His own, just as the First Person, who is called Father, and the Second, the Son ? Why has he merely a name which is common to others and which is equally true when applied to the other Two Persons ? The reason is due, not to any imperfection or defect in this divine Person, but to the feebleness of our own intelligence. For we are unable, we know not how, to speak of God except according to the ideas we have of created things. It is from these that we derive the

names we give to God. Now in human speech he who engenders is called father, and he who is engendered is called son; and accordingly the Prophets and Apostles, knowing by Divine revelation that the First Person in God begets the Second, have called that First Person by the name of Father, and that Second Person by the name of Son.

But the Third Person is not begotten, but proceeds from the Father and the Son by way of love and will; and as no other substantial production of the kind was known to man, and as there was consequently no proper name to denote it, the Prophets and Apostles contented themselves with the name of Holy Ghost, thus employing as a proper name a term which was really applicable to the Father and Son as well. Yet though the name is equally applicable to the Father and the Son, it is none the less true that there are good grounds for appropriating it to the Third Person because of the fact that He proceeds from the Father and the Son by inspiration.

(2) The Second truth to be believed regarding the Person of the Holy Ghost is, that He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and that the distinction of the Third Person from the other Two is based on the mode in which such procession takes place. What distinguishes the First Person is this, that the Father is not begotten, and proceeds from no other person, but from all eternity begets a Son; what distinguishes the Second Person is, that He proceeds from the Father, inasmuch as He is begotten by Him; and what distinguishes the Third Person is, that He proceeds from the Father and the Son. All this is revealed in Sacred Scripture, which says of Him that He is the spirit of the Father and of the Son, and that He was sent on the Apostles by both the Father and the Son; and hence it is that the Nicene Creed, for the sake of greater clearness, adds the words: "Who proceeds from the Father and the Son."

And how? As already mentioned, by way of inspiration, of love, of will. As the Father knowing Himself and His infinite perfections from all eternity, engenders the Son by that very knowledge and comprehension of His own being; so, too, the Father and the Son, loving each other from all eternity, produce the Holy Ghost by their reciprocal love.

Hence, as the Son is begotten of the Father by way of intelligence, so does the Holy Ghost proceed from the Father and the Son by way of will and of love.

And as the Son is the substantial knowledge of the Father,

and consequently a subsisting Person distinct from the Father, so is the Holy Ghost the substantial love of the Father and the Son, and consequently a subsisting person distinct from the other two. The only difference between the Son and the Holy Ghost, then, is this, that the Son proceeds from the Father, but by way of generation, while the Holy Ghost proceeds simply from both Father and Son.

(3) Finally, we are bound to believe that the Holy Ghost, though proceeding from the Father and the Son, is equal in all things to the Father and the Son, is true and one only God with the Father and the Son. As the Son is generated by the Father, and is nevertheless the same God with Him, because He has the same essence, the same substance with the Father; so also is the Holy Ghost one and the same God with the Father and the Son. And hence it is that while there are three really distinct persons, there is but one God.

And so it is. Thus in Sacred Scripture the Holy Ghost is several times given by the name of God; to Him are attributed perfections which can belong to God alone, such, for instance, as that He is everywhere, that He knows all and contains all; in His name baptism and the other sacraments are conferred, though we know that these cannot be conferred in the name of any creature, but only in the name of God, the author and distributor of grace; and hence it is that just as it is said in the Creed "I believe in God the Father," "I believe in God the Son," so also is it said "I believe in the Holy Ghost,"—denoting thereby that the Holy Ghost is one and the same God with the Father and the Son, and that we must believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him as our sovereign good,—all of which is still more clearly expressed in the Nicene Creed: "Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified."

But if so why is the Holy Ghost always named in the last place and not sometimes in the first or second? Because to do so would be an error, since the Holy Ghost comes third in the necessary order of the Divine emanations. Were we to name Him in the first place, we should thereby imply that He is the Person that generates—and this, as we know, belongs to the Father alone; while were we to name Him in the second place, we should thereby imply that He is begotten—and this, as we know, applies to the Son alone. Hence He must be named in the third place, because of the fact that He proceeds from the Father and the Son. For the rest, it must be remembered that in the Godhead the fact of being Father implies

no greater perfection than in being Son or Holy Ghost, the Divine nature being one and indivisible.

In God there is indeed a diversity of relations but not of substance ; there is a distinction in persons but not in nature—in the First Person, paternity ; in the Second, sonship ; in the Third inspiration ; but for all that, between them there is neither superiority, nor dependence, nor inequality of time, dignity or perfection. As the Athanasian Creed expresses it : “ In this Trinity there is nothing before and nothing after ; nothing greater and nothing less ; but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.” In a word, the Three Persons are equally eternal, equally powerful, equally immense, equally sovereign, equally divine. If human speech refers to them as First, Second, Third, this must be taken as simply indicating the diversity of their relations, and the order of their procession.

Thus far regarding the truths which faith teaches us regarding the Person of the Holy Ghost and the mystery of the Trinity—truths which, though above our understanding, are at the same time none the less certain, having been divinely revealed. Let us, therefore, accept them,—let us not try to penetrate them ; but with one heart and one voice let us adore the Holy Ghost and glorify Him together with the Father and the Son ; for with them He is but one God, one Lord who liveth and reigneth through endless ages.

II. But it is not enough to consider the Holy Ghost as He is in Himself—we must also see what He is with regard to us, that is to say, we must examine why and in what sense He is called the spirit of life, the vivifying spirit ; how far we need Him ; in what way He descends on us ; what the effects He produces in our souls ; and finally the means necessary to receive Him and preserve Him in us. No need to remark that all these are questions of the highest importance if we are to form a just estimate of this great gift, and derive profit therefrom.

(I) And first, why is the Holy Ghost called the vivifying spirit ? As has been already pointed out all that is accomplished by God outside Himself is common to the Three Divine Persons, and one alone does not rule and guide creatures without the concurrence of the others. Yet as all works of omnipotence are attributed to the Father because He is the principle of the other two Persons ; and works of wisdom to the Son because He is begotten by the intelligence of the Father ; so all the works of God's love are referred to the Holy Ghost because He is the substantial love of the Father and Son.

Thus the creation of the world was a work of God's love, and

hence we read in Sacred Scripture that it was the Holy Ghost who established the heavens and fecundated the waters: *The Spirit of God moved over the waters.*¹ The Incarnation of the Word of God was a work of love, and hence it is said that the Holy Ghost was the Author of His conception: *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost.* And, not to mention many other works, the sanctification of our souls is a work of love, and hence is said to be the function of the Holy Ghost: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.*² He is called the vivifying spirit, then, because He is the Author of life, both natural and supernatural; but especially because He gives life to the soul by the infusion of sanctifying grace.

This, let me repeat, does not mean that this particular work does not belong equally and indivisibly to the other two Persons,—all it means is that it is specially attributed to the Holy Ghost for the reason already indicated. Hence, according to our way of viewing and distinguishing things, it would seem as if the whole three Divine Persons contributed, each His part, to our well-being—the Father by creating us, the Son by redeeming us, and the Holy Ghost by sanctifying us.

(2) From all this it will be easy to infer the great need we have of this Divine Spirit. To the soul He is all that the soul is to the body. And without the soul what is the body? A mere formless mass, devoid of movement, feeling, life. In the same way, without this Divine Spirit our souls are lifeless, that is to say, utterly incapable of any supernatural or meritorious act. For a work of ours to be good and supernatural it is necessary that the impulse of the grace of the Holy Ghost should make us act; and for that same work to be meritorious towards eternal life it is indispensable that the Holy Ghost should abide in us personally by His sanctifying grace; so that if He does not abide in us, if He does not move us, we can accomplish no good.

Thus you see that this gift is the fruit and the consummation of all the mysteries accomplished by Jesus Christ. It is by Him indeed that we have been redeemed; but the grace of Redemption is applied to our souls by the Holy Ghost; and hence it would avail us nothing to have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, if the fruit of His passion and death were not applied to our souls by the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ, during His stay on earth, had taught us by His word and example; He had shown us the way of salvation, that is

¹ Gen. i. 2.

² Rom. v. 5.

to say, what we are to believe and to do. But this was not enough—it was furthermore necessary to infuse faith into our souls, to give us the strength to observe the divine precepts, and to impress deeply on our hearts hatred of sin and love of God. Now this work was reserved to the Holy Ghost, according to the prophecy of Ezechiel: *And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments and do them.*¹ Such, then, is the internal mission of the Holy Ghost.

(3) This much being borne in mind, let us now see how the Holy Ghost is sent down on us. This can happen, as St. Thomas explains, in two ways—visibly and invisibly.

(a) Four times has the Holy Ghost descended visibly on earth:—

First, at the Baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan, when the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, which came and rested on Him;

Secondly, in the mystery of the Transfiguration, when He appeared under the form of a resplendent cloud clothing our Lord's body in glory;

Thirdly, after the resurrection, when He descended on the Apostles under the form of breathing: *He breathed on them and said: Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*²

The last and most remarkable descent of the Holy Ghost was on the same Apostles, the day of Pentecost. It was the tenth day since they had retired into the supper-room in expectation of the promised gift, when *suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a mighty wind and it filleth the whole house where they were sitting; and there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.*

Such were the visible descents of the Holy Ghost, with regard to which, however, it should be observed that these signs or figures were not the Holy Ghost Himself but merely symbols by which the Divine Spirit rendered His presence sensible, and made manifest His operations. The dove signifies innocence, purity, fecundity in good works. The cloud signifies the protection which God accords to His

¹ Ezech. xxxvi, 26.

² John xx, 22.

³ Acts ii, 2.

elect, and to the souls that are dear to Him. The breathing signifies the spiritual life conferred by the Sacraments. The tongues of fire indicate intelligence, light, the gift of tongues, the love of God, the ardour of charity, and the like.

(b) As regards the invisible descent of the Holy Ghost, it is permanent and perpetual in the Church. The promise made by our Lord : *You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you*,¹ was not limited to the Apostles alone, but was common to all the faithful, just like the fruit of His passion and death : *I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, that He may abide with you for ever*.²

The Sacraments are the principal channels by which the Holy Ghost descends into souls properly disposed, taking up His dwelling there, but in a way quite different from that in which He is present everywhere as God. Thus the just are called the temples of God and the habitations of the Holy Ghost : *Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*?³ The other two Persons also descend into our hearts : *We will come to him and will make our abode with him*;⁴ but the Holy Ghost dwells therein in a special way as the author and immediate cause of our sanctification.

All this will be rendered still clearer by one or two points that remain to be explained. Meanwhile let us ever bear in mind that we are confronted by one of two alternatives,—we are governed either by the spirit of the world or by the spirit of God, two spirits that cannot go hand in hand,—that even present an utter opposition in thoughts, desires, inclinations and operations.

From this two-fold spirit spring those two cities to one or other of which every human being on earth must belong—the city of God and the city of the world. Now in the city of the world all is governed by the three great passions of pride, avarice and sensuality : *All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life*.⁵ But the city of God is ruled by the spirit of God, by the maxims and example of Jesus Christ, by repression of the passions, and by a life of recollection, piety and penance. The one, let me repeat, cannot go hand in hand with the other ; and it would be a monstrous error to imagine that we can arrange and conduct things in such a way as to stand well with both God and the world ; for Jesus Christ has emphatically proclaimed that the spirit

¹ Acts i. 8. ² John xiv. 16. ³ 1 Cor. iii. 16. ⁴ John xiv. 23. ⁵ 1 John ii. 16

of God is incompatible with that of the world : *The spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive.*¹

Now to which of these two cities do we belong ? Let us enter into ourselves and see which is the spirit that animates us,—whether it is heavenly and divine, or earthly and carnal. If the latter, we are clearly on the road to perdition, since there can be no salvation for us if we are not in the number of the children of God ; and we cannot be in the number of the children of God if we are not animated, directed and guided by His divine Spirit,

See, then, how necessary it is for us incessantly to call the Holy Ghost down on us, so that by His divine fire He may destroy in us all carnal desires and concupiscences ; that He may detach our hearts from all that is earthly, and from this world that knows not Christ,—nay, that is His enemy, and consequently is reproved and proscribed by Him ; in fine, that He may raise up our minds to things heavenly and spiritual, and make us relish and esteem them. If this divine fire be but truly enkindled in our hearts, what wonders will it not operate in us ? what wonders has it not operated in the past ? and what wonders does it not daily operate in many and many a soul !

¹ John xiv. 17.

Twenty-sixth Instruction on the Creed

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST*

IN our last instruction we considered the Holy Ghost in Himself and in His essence ; we saw that the Holy Ghost is a real person, not a mere abstraction nor a simple perfection or attribute of God ; that He is truly and really a divine Person, distinct from the other two Persons, yet equal to them in all things ; and that, as He proceeds

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THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

(*Catechism of Pius X.*)

Q. Name the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

A. The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and the Fear of the Lord.

Q. What purpose do these gifts serve ?

A. The gifts of the Holy Ghost serve to establish us in Faith, Hope and Charity, and to render us prompt in the exercise of those acts of virtue necessary towards attaining the perfection of a Christian life.

Q. What is Wisdom ?

A. Wisdom is a gift by which the mind is lifted up from earthly and transitory things, enabling us to contemplate things eternal, that is to say, God Himself, the eternal truth, and to relish and love Him, in which consists all our good.

Q. What is Understanding ?

A. Understanding is a gift which facilitates, as far as this is possible to mortal man, the understanding of the truths of faith and of the mysteries of God, which we are unable to know by the natural light of the intellect.

Q. What is Counsel ?

A. Counsel is a gift by which amidst the doubts and uncertainties of human life we are enabled to recognize those things that redound more to God's glory, to our own salvation, and to that of our neighbour.

Q. What is Fortitude ?

A. Fortitude is a gift which inspires us with valour and courage to observe faithfully the holy law of God and of the Church, by conquering all obstacles and all the assaults of our enemies.

Q. What is Knowledge ?

A. Knowledge is a gift enabling us to estimate created things at their proper worth, and to learn how to use them rightly and to direct them to our last end, which is God.

Q. What is Piety ?

A. Piety is a gift enabling us to venerate and love God and His Saints, and to preserve a pious and benevolent mind towards our neighbour for the love of God.

Q. What is the Fear of the Lord ?

A. The Fear of the Lord is a gift which makes us respect God and fear to offend His Divine Majesty, and which detaches us from evil while inciting us to good.

¹ John xiv. 16.

from the Father and Son from all eternity, the numerical denomination by which He is designated denotes neither inferiority of nature nor posteriority of duration, but simply His order and procession.

We also considered Him in His action on creatures, that is to say, in His exterior works, the works of goodness and love which, though really common to the other two Persons, are yet specially attributed to that Person who is the substantial love of the others. We also examined why He is called the vivifying spirit; the need we have of Him, and the various ways in which He can be sent on us, visibly and invisibly.

We have now to examine the virtue, the strength, the dispositions and effects which the Holy Ghost produces in our souls:

The descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles was not a grace or privilege reserved to themselves alone,—it was a blessing which Jesus Christ merited for the whole Church, and hence a blessing as permanent and perpetual as the Church herself: *The Father shall give you another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, that He may abide with you for ever.*¹ So that from that day when the Holy Ghost descended for the first time on the infant Church assembled in the supper-room He has never ceased to descend on her as time went on, enlightening her, animating her, sanctifying her, though in a different manner.

On the Apostles He descended visibly in the form of tongues of fire; on the faithful He every day descends invisibly, especially through the sacraments, in which under various signs He communicates Himself and His graces to us. But though such descent is invisible and outwardly imperceptible, it is certainly the same in the interior operations which it produces in souls properly disposed. Let us, then, see its effects, and the best means of applying them to our souls and of preserving them in us.

The effects produced by the Holy Ghost in the Apostles were two-fold—interior and exterior effects:

The *interior* effects consisted in enlightening their minds, purifying their hearts, filling them with strength, courage and generosity,—all of which were denoted by the form under which He came. For, as fire possesses the triple property of illuminating, purifying, and heating, so the power of the Holy Ghost enlightened the Apostles and changed them from rude and ignorant men into wise and enlightened men; it purified them by banishing from their hearts all imperfections and all vicious attachments from which they had not hitherto been exempt; finally it inflamed them, rendering them as intrepid and courageous as they had previously been timid and

fearful. In a word, they were interiorly changed, and became other men.

As for the *exterior* effects, they consisted in the gifts of prophecy, of healing the sick, of casting out devils, of working miracles, of knowing divers tongues without study, of understanding Sacred Scripture, and finally in the science of convincing and persuading. Regarding these exterior gifts, it is enough here to remark that they continued for some time and then ceased, or at least became rarer ; because they had been accorded as extraordinary means to add force to the preaching of the Apostles and to strengthen the infant Church. When the needs of the Church so require, God never fails, even now, to raise up from time to time prophets, doctors and wonder-workers. It must be observed, however, that these graces are given, not so much for the benefit of him who receives them, for he may even be a sinner, as for the glory and edification of the Church and the spiritual advantage of the faithful.

But as regards His essential, interior, invisible effects which tend towards the sanctification of souls, they continue always the same ; and as they are always the same, and always necessary to salvation, they alone can render us dear to God, before whom, as St. Paul says, neither the gift of prophecy nor the gift of miracles is of any avail without charity and sanctifying grace : *If I have not charity, I am nothing.*¹ Thus, then, all that contributes to our sanctification, to our conversion, to our interior renovation, is the work of the Holy Ghost,—He is the Spirit of truth who instructs us, the Spirit of grace who sanctifies us, the Spirit of love who unites us to God.

By this divine Spirit of love are dispensed the various gifts that contribute to the formation and perfection of the spiritual life. From Him come the seven gifts, called the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which in spirit the Prophet Isaias saw resting on the head of our Lord and with which He was filled through the essential quality of His divine nature—wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord : *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him ; the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness ; and He shall be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord,*²—such are the seven steps by which we may ascend from a life of sin to the highest rung in the ladder of perfection ; and hence it is of the utmost importance to have some idea of them.

¹ Cor. xiii. 2.

² Is. xi. 2.

The *Fear of the Lord* is the first step towards wisdom, which is the highest degree of perfection: *The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.*¹ It is a gift which penetrates us with salutary feelings of fear, and arouses us from sloth, by bringing before our eyes the fearful judgments of God, His power and His wisdom, the uncertainty of the hour of death, the eternal chastisements that await the sinner; it is this gift, too, that inspires us with a profound respect for God. This fear is salutary, not only to sinners, but also to the just. To sinners, because it impels them to give up sin and to change their life. As a rule it is not the love of God that decides sinners to repent—it is the terrifying thought of divine vengeance ready at any moment to burst over their heads. This is why the Council of Trent says that the fear of the Lord is the first disposition and preparation for grace. But it is also of advantage to the just, as a means of maintaining them unswervingly in the practice of virtue, guarding them against presumption, and rendering them vigilant and humble. The very martyrs, as St. Augustine remarks, had to arm themselves with the fear of hell in order to avoid succumbing to the violence of their torments, falling away and being lost. Such, then, is the great benefit conferred on us by the Holy Ghost when He fills our hearts with the fear of the Lord; such too was the incessant prayer of David: *Pierce my heart with Thy love*;² and such too is the recommendation of our Lord Himself: *Fear him that can destroy both body and soul into hell.*³

It is well to remark, however, that all fear is not a gift of the Holy Ghost. There is a species of fear that is nothing short of a temptation of the devil. How, then, are we to distinguish the one from the other? By their effects. If fear engenders and fosters sentiments and desires of conversion, it is of God and should be cultivated; but if it inspires diffidence and distaste for things spiritual, and a sort of aversion from religion itself, it is of the demon and must be rejected.

The second step is *piety*. It is a gift which unites us to God as to a most loving Father, and which makes us observe His precepts, not only through fear, but through feelings of love. When a man truly repents of his sins, God gives him a prompt and eager will to do good—a will which inspires him with respect for God and for all things pertaining to religion, and which renders him charitable towards his neighbour, while at the same time making him find a certain spiritual charm in the practice of these things. In this supernatural

¹ Ps. cx. 10.² Ps. cxviii.³ Matt. x. 28.

devotion consists, strictly speaking, that sentiment called *pity*, which first of all regards God as the primary object of our worship, and after Him our neighbour as the image of God.

The third degree is *knowledge*, which banishes error and ignorance, the primary sources of all our sins and of all our falls. Be the will ever so much disposed to do good, it nevertheless still needs to be securely guided by reason; for if reason is blind it will infallibly precipitate the will down the abyss. Now from this danger the Holy Ghost preserves us by the gift of knowledge,—enlightening our minds in order to let us see what we are to do and what to avoid, so as to please God; awakening in us at opportune moments salutary thoughts and reflections; and presenting the truth to our minds with such clearness that, far from allowing ourselves to be deceived, we are astonished how others can be so blind as to go astray.

And here it must be admitted that on many occasions the simple and the unlearned, provided they are at the same time pious and God-fearing, know very much more and are much better able to regulate their conduct, than many whom the world regards as learned and wise. Now this is due to the gift of knowledge, which the Holy Ghost infuses into such souls.

But not only do our falls arise from ignorance; they are also the outcome of frailty, timidity, weakness. A thousand difficulties stand in the way of flight from evil, the practice of good, victory over the passions, the exercise of virtue; many trials have to be faced in the course of life; and hence it comes to pass that many souls are discouraged, retrace their steps, and abandon the path they had entered on. Now the Holy Ghost fortifies us against all such timidity and weakness by the fourth gift, which is that of fortitude.

Fortitude is a gift by which the will, supernaturally strengthened and invigorated, is rendered capable of surmounting the obstacles and difficulties that are met with, and of making every sacrifice. Of all the seven gifts this was particularly in evidence in the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Ghost,—as we know, they courageously faced threats, chastisements, persecution, and even death itself in its most dreadful forms, without being troubled or afraid; nay, they were even jubilant and exultant at the thought of being worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ: *They went from the presence of the Council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.*¹ In like manner, it was this sovereign virtue and

¹ Acts v. 41.

strength that sustained holy martyrs, tender children, and delicate virgins, who, with intrepid soul, and even with gladness of heart, faced the bitterest torments and even death itself,—so far can the Holy Ghost strengthen human weakness, no matter how extreme it may be.

In the fifth place comes the gift of *counsel*, putting us on our guard against the arts and snares of the devil, who, the moment he sees a soul resolved and decided to do good, has recourse to deceit and trickery,—filling that soul with scruples and groundless fears, and proposing evil under the guise and aspect of good. But the Holy Ghost gives it the gift of counsel, that is to say, a spirit of discernment, by which, when confronted by grave and unforeseen doubts, it is enabled accurately to distinguish the true good from the false, and to choose the right and sure way from amongst a thousand deceitful ways.

The sixth is the gift of *understanding*, elevating the soul, and enabling it to comprehend and grasp the maxims and truths of salvation. There is a great difference between believing and believing—between believing with a feeble and languishing faith, and having a living grasp of the mysteries and truths of religion. Experience is a witness to this. Thus, of two individuals who profess their belief in the same thing, one finds little difficulty in doing good, while the other experiences the greatest difficulty; the one would allow himself to be cut into pieces rather than commit a mortal sin, while the other does not hesitate to soil his soul on all occasions. Now, why this? It is due to the fact that the latter has not a thorough grasp of the things pertaining to salvation,—he believes in them in the abstract and superficially; the result is that the will has no energy to do good. A faith of this kind does indeed distinguish a Christian from an infidel but it is insufficient to make one a good Christian. Now, from such pernicious folly and stupidity the Holy Ghost delivers us by helping us thoroughly to grasp the truths of faith in such a way that our faith exercises a practical and efficacious influence on our life and conduct,—a most precious gift, whence proceeds all fervour in the practice of good works.

Finally, the gift of *wisdom*, which is represented in Sacred Scripture as the opposite of foolishness. Now, as folly consists in judging things to be other than they really are, and consequently in holding in high esteem what is of little value, such as things of earth; and, on the contrary, in setting little value on what is really great, such as heavenly blessings; so, on the other hand, wisdom consists

in estimating all things at their true value, in despising transitory things, and in holding things eternal in the highest esteem.

It is this gift that makes us find only distaste and weariness in the goods of here below, and attaches us to those of heaven. Hence it is called *wisdom*, or delicious knowledge, because it consists in a certain delicious flavour and taste of the things of God, enabling the soul to rest in Him and tend steadily towards Him as its last end. It is this total detachment from earthly things which we admire in the Saints; this generous renunciation of pleasures, honours and splendid fortunes, to become disciples of Jesus Christ; this life of continual mortification. Now all these things, which to us seem so surprising, are the ordinary effects of the heavenly wisdom infused into a soul by the Holy Ghost.

This much should suffice regarding the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. As will be already clear, their purpose is to sanctify the whole man, both in mind and in heart. To the mind are referred the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge; to the will and heart those of fortitude, piety and the fear of the Lord.

But, as a tree produces its fruit in accordance with its nature, so do these gifts, which the Holy Ghost pours forth into us, produce certain virtuous movements, called the *fruits of the Holy Ghost*, that is to say, various acts of virtue the passing exercise of which produces a special spiritual sweetness in the soul. In his Epistle to the Galatians the Apostle enumerates twelve:—charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency and chastity.¹

Without entering into detail, it will be enough to observe in a general way that all virtues, all good impressions, all that a soul experiences of heavenly sweetness, consolation and peace, are the fruit of the Holy Ghost,—an additional proof of the necessity of this divine gift, which is the vital nourishment of the soul. Before concluding, then, let us briefly consider the best means of obtaining and preserving this great gift in us:—

To receive the Holy Ghost, as we have already explained, the Sacraments are requisite, all of which have been instituted to sanctify us; but the grace of sanctification is effected by the Holy Ghost communicating Himself to our souls: *The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.*² We must, then, frequent the sacraments, and frequent them with the requisite dispositions,—not merely with those dispositions that are absolutely

¹ Gal. v. 22.

² Rom. v. 5.

necessary to avoid profaning them and simply to receive grace, but with the greatest fervour, so as to receive this grace more abundantly. Doubtless, all those who are properly disposed receive the Holy Ghost ; but all do not receive grace in the same degree, because it is always given in proportion to the dispositions of each one, as the Council of Trent clearly lays down. Hence we must not rest satisfied with a perfunctory preparation ; but we ought to endeavour to make the best possible preparation, which will consist in four things : purity of conscience, humility of heart, confidence in God and detachment from things of earth.

Moreover, speaking only of the helps and graces necessary to shun evil and do good, to be converted to God, and to stand firm in that conversion, sinners can receive them, and the just can increase them, in other ways in addition to the sacraments. Prayer, meditation, pious reading, the word of God—such, to use the expression of Holy Job, are the veins and channels by which the Holy Ghost transmits into the soul an abundance of His heavenly gifts. And hence it may be inferred that to experience weariness, distaste and estrangement in the matter of these practices is the very worst thing that could happen the soul, since these exterior means are never unaccompanied by the interior lights and graces of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, we must correspond faithfully with the inspirations and impulses of the Holy Ghost ; for he who knows how to profit by smaller graces, merits greater graces ; while he who despises and neglects smaller graces, will gradually deprive himself of further graces.

The Apostles received the Holy Ghost, first as a gentle breathing, and then as a mighty wind. Now from this we may learn that the ordinary course taken by the Holy Ghost is to conduct us gradually from virtue to virtue, and to communicate choicer graces to us in proportion to the measure of our correspondence with those already received. And as in the way of perdition no one becomes bad all at once, but gradually, falling from one abyss to another ; so is it in the way of salvation—a good impulse, a holy inspiration, a salutary stimulus, received and acted on, attracts further helps, and brings an increase of lights and graces. This is the reason why we are recommended in Sacred Scripture not to resist the lights and invitations of the Holy Ghost : *Resist not the Holy Ghost—Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*,¹ If, then, we are faithful to the voice and inspirations of the Holy Spirit, we shall go on increasing always, and growing strong in His grace.

¹ Eph. iv. 30.

Let us, then, incessantly beseech the Eternal Father and His beloved Son to send the Holy Spirit on us; let us supplicate this divine Spirit to enkindle in our hearts that heavenly fire which has produced and still continues to produce so many saints in the Church. If we but burn with their heavenly fire, we shall want neither light nor zeal nor courage nor constancy nor fervour,—all becomes easy to him who truly loves God; and the Holy Ghost, who is the substantial love of the Father and the Son, is given to us precisely to inflame us with the love of God and to unite us to Him by the indissoluble bond of eternal charity.

CHAPTER XI

THE NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

1.—Importance
of this Article.

WITH what diligence the pastor should explain the ninth article of the Creed to the faithful may readily be estimated from two important considerations: The first is, as St. Augustine remarks, that the Prophets have spoken more plainly and explicitly of the Church than of Christ, foreseeing, as they did, that a far greater number would err and be deceived on this head than on the mystery of the Incarnation; and in point of fact wicked men have never been wanting who, like the ape pretending to be a man, would claim that they alone are Catholics and would assert no less impiously than proudly that the Catholic Church is to be found in their midst alone.

The second consideration is, that he who has this truth firmly fixed in his heart will have little difficulty in avoiding the dreadful danger of heresy. For a person is not to be called a heretic simply because he has once sinned in matters of faith; but he is a heretic who, despising the authority of the Church, obstinately clings to his erroneous opinions. Since, then, it is impossible for a man to be infected with the plague of heresy as long as he continues to hold what this article proposes to his belief, the pastor should use his best endeavours in order that the faithful may be sufficiently instructed in this mystery, and, thus guarded against the wiles of Satan, may persevere in the true faith.

For the rest, this article depends on the preceding one. For as we have already shown that the Holy Ghost is the Fountain and Giver of all holiness, we here profess our belief that this Church has been endowed by Him with sanctity.

I.—MEANING OF THE CHURCH

2.—The Church denotes the congregation of the faithful.

The Latins, borrowing the word Church from the Greeks, have since the preaching of the Gospel consecrated it to sacred things. Let us, first of all, then, make its meaning clear. The word Church (*Ecclesia*) means a calling forth; but writers subsequently used it to denote a reunion, an assembly of men, whether these men, thus gathered together, worshipped the true God or were members of a false religion.

Thus in the Acts of the Apostles it is written of the people of Ephesus that when the town-clerk had appeased a tumultuous gathering of the people he said: *If you enquire after any other matter it may be decided in a lawful Church* (assembly)¹—thus calling the Ephesians, though worshippers of Diana, a lawful Church. And not only were the Gentiles, who knew not God, called a Church, but even the assemblies of the wicked and impious were sometimes thus styled: *I have hated the Church of the malignant*, says the prophet, *and with the wicked I will not sit.*²

In Scripture usage, however, the word later on came to signify the Christian society and the assemblies of the faithful, that is, of those who have been called by faith to the light of truth and to the knowledge of God; who have been enabled to forsake the darkness of ignorance and error; who worship the living and true God in piety and holiness; and who serve Him with their whole heart—in a word, “The Church,” as St. Augustine says, “is the faithful of the whole world.”

3.—Mysteries revealed by the word Church.

The mysteries contained in this word are by no means unimportant. Taking the word in the sense of a calling forth, we recognise the benignity and splendour of God's grace, and we see at a glance how very different is the Church from all other societies. Other societies rest only on human reason and prudence; but the Church reposes on the wisdom and counsel of God, who has called us, inwardly by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who opens the heart, and outwardly by the ministry and labours of pastors and preachers.

Moreover, the end of this vocation—that is to say, the knowledge and possession of things eternal—will be at once understood if we but remember why the faithful of the Old Law were called a Synagogue, that is, a flock; for, as St. Augustine teaches, they were so called because, like cattle accustomed to

¹ Acts xix. 39.

² Ps. xxv. 5.

herd together to live, they looked only to terrestrial and transitory goods. Rightly, then, are the Christian people called, not a Synagogue, but a Church, because, despising the fleeting things of earth, they pursue those things only that are heavenly and that never pass away.

4.—Other names
given to the
Church in
Holy Writ.

Many other names, full of mystery, have been used to designate the Christian body. Thus it is called *the house and edifice of God* by the Apostle, who, writing to Timothy, says: *If I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*¹

The Church is here called a house, because it is, so to say, one family governed by one father, in which all spiritual goods are common to all the members.

It is also called the flock of the sheep of the Christ, He being its *Door and the Shepherd*.²

It is called the Spouse of Christ: *I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*,³ writes St. Paul to the Corinthians; while in his letter to the Ephesians he says: *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church*.⁴ And speaking of matrimony, he says: *This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church*.⁵

Finally, the Church is called the Body of Christ, as may be seen in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.⁶

These various names are of great help in encouraging the faithful to prove themselves worthy of the immense goodness and mercy of God, who has chosen them to be His own people.

II.—CHURCH MILITANT AND CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

5.—The Church
Triumphant.

This much being explained, it will be necessary to point out the various parts of the Church, and to indicate the difference between them, in order that the faithful may more thoroughly grasp the nature, properties, gifts and graces of God's beloved Church, and having done so, never cease to bless His adorable Name.

Now, in the Church there are two principal parts—the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant.

The Church Triumphant is that glorious and happy com-

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

⁵ Eph. v. 32.

² John x. 7.

⁶ Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 24.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 2.

⁴ Eph. v. 25.

pany of Heavenly Spirits and of all those who have already triumphed over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and who, free from and beyond the troubles of this life, enjoy eternal bliss.

The Church Militant is the congregation of all the faithful still living on earth. It is called Militant because it is in a state of perpetual warfare against its implacable enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

6.—Church Militant and Church Triumphant but one Church. We must not, however, imagine there are two Churches. Of the same Church, there are, as we have already said, two parts, one of which has preceded the other, and is now in possession of its heavenly country; the other, following every day, until at length, united with our Saviour, it shall rest in bliss unending.

7.—In the Church Militant are found both good and bad. Now the Church Militant comprises two classes: the good and the bad. The bad do indeed partake of the same sacraments, and profess the same faith as the good; but they differ in life and conduct; while the good are joined and united not only by the profession of the same faith and the reception of the same sacraments, but also by the spirit of grace and the bond of charity.

Of these it is said: *The Lord knoweth who are His.*¹ Men may indeed form some conjecture as to who are to be reckoned in the number of the good; but they cannot know for certain. Hence it must not be imagined that Christ our Saviour referred to this portion of the Church when He directs us to the Church and commands us to obey her. As this part of the Church is unknown, how could we be certain as to whose tribunal to recur to, or whose authority to obey?

The Church, then, comprises both the good and the bad, as Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Holy Fathers testify; and it was in this sense that the Apostle spoke of: *One body and one spirit.*²

8.—The Church is visible. Understood thus, the Church is known over all the world, and has been compared to a *city seated on a mountain* and visible from every side,³—she must be hidden from none, for the simple reason that all are bound to obey her authority.

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 19.² Eph. iv. 4.³ Matt. v. 14.

That the Church contains not only the good but also the bad, the Gospel shows by many parables ; for instance, when it tells us that : *The kingdom of heaven* (i.e., the Church Militant) *is like to a net cast into the sea* ;¹ or to a field in which cockle was oversown among the wheat ;² or to a threshing-floor on which the grain is mixed up with the chaff ;³ or to the ten virgins, some of whom were wise and some foolish ;⁴ nay, ages even before this, we may discern a figure and resemblance of the Church in the Ark of Noah, in which unclean as well as clean animals were contained.⁵

But though Catholic faith truly and uniformly teaches that both the good and the bad belong to the Church, yet, in accordance with that same faith, the faithful should be reminded that there is a wide difference between them. The bad are in the Church, just as chaff is mingled with the grain on the threshing-floor, or as dead members sometimes remain attached to a living body.

III.—THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

9.—Classes excluded from the Church.

From what has been already said, it follows that three, and only three, classes are excluded from the Church : first, infidels ; secondly, heretics and schismatics ; and thirdly, the excommunicated. Infidels, because they have never been in the Church, have never known the Church and have never partaken of any of the sacraments of the Church. Heretics and schismatics, because they have fallen away from the Church, and consequently no more belong to the Church than deserters belong to an army from which they have run away ; yet it cannot be denied that they are still subject to the power of the Church, which has the right to call them before her tribunals, to punish them, and strike them with anathema. Finally, the excommunicated, because they have been cut off from the Church by the Church's sentence, and belong not to her communion, till they repent.

As for all the rest, no matter how bad and wicked they may be, it cannot be doubted that they still belong to the Church ; and this is a truth which should be explained diligently to the people, so as to let them plainly see and be certain that, even should the lives of her ministers be unholy, they are still within the Church, and lose nothing of their authority.

¹ Matt. xiii. 47.

² Matt. xiii. 25.

³ Luke iii. 17.

⁴ Matt. xxv. 2.

⁵ 1 Pet. iii. 20.

10.—Other uses of the word Church. Portions of the Universal Church are usually called Churches. Thus the Apostle speaks of the Church at Corinth, at Galatia, at Laodicea, at Thessalonica.

He also speaks of private families of the faithful as Churches ; thus he commands the Church in the house of Prisca and Aquila to be saluted ; while elsewhere he writes : *Aquila and Priscilla with the Church that is in their house salute you much.*¹ He uses the same expression in his letter to Philemon.

Sometimes, too, the prelates and pastors of the Church are designated by that name : *If he will not hear thee tell the Church,*² said our Lord, meaning the authorities of the Church.

The place also where the faithful meet to hear the word of God, or to discharge any other religious duty, is called a Church. But in this article the word Church specially signifies the whole mass of Christians, both good and bad,—not merely the governing, but also the governed.

IV.—THE CHURCH IS ONE

11.—The marks of the Church. The marks or signs of the Church should be explained to the faithful, so as to enable them to appreciate the greatness of the blessing bestowed by God on those who are born and brought up within the bosom of the Church.

Her first mark, described in the Nicene Creed, is that she is ONE : *One is My dove, My perfect one is but one.*³

Now, when we say that so great a multitude of men, scattered far and wide though they are, is called one, it is because, as St. Paul proclaims in his letter to the Ephesians, there is but *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*⁴

For her Ruler and Governor is but one. Her invisible Governor is Christ, whom the Eternal Father has made *Head over all the Church which is His body* ;⁵ while her visible ruler is he who, as lawful successor to Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, occupies the See of Rome.

12.—A visible head necessary towards unity. It was the unanimous opinion and teaching of the Fathers that, to establish and preserve the unity of the Church, one visible Head was necessary. This St. Jerome both clearly saw and as clearly expressed when,

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 19. ² Matt. xviii. 17. ³ Cant. vi. 8. ⁴ Eph. iv. 5. ⁵ Eph. i. 22.

in his work against Jovinian, he wrote: "One is elected in order that, a head being once established, there could be no pretext for schism"; and in his letter to Pope Damasus he exclaims: "Let envy cease—let the ambition of Roman grandeur vanish! I speak to the successor of the Fisherman, to the disciple of the Cross. Following Christ alone as my Chief, I am united in communion with your Holiness, that is to say, with the Chair of Peter. On this rock I know the Church to be built. Whoever eats the pascal lamb outside this house is profane—those who are not in the Ark of Noah shall perish in the deluge."

Long before St. Jerome, this had been proved by St. Irenæus, as well as by St. Cyprian, who, speaking of the unity of the Church, says: "The Lord says to Peter: '*I say unto thee: Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church*;'"¹ He builds His Church on that one man alone; and if after His Resurrection He bestowed equal power on the other Apostles in these words: *As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you: receive ye the Holy Ghost*,² yet to make the idea of unity more manifest, He decides by His sovereign authority, that that unity should be derived from one alone."

Again, there is Optatus of Milevis, who says: "You cannot be excused on the score of ignorance, for you know that in the City of Rome the episcopal chair was first conferred on Peter, who occupied it as head of all the Apostles; so that, by means of that one chair, unity might be preserved by all, lest the other Apostles should contend for a separate chair, each one for himself; so that whoever sets up another chair in opposition to that single chair must be regarded as a schismatic and prevaricator."

Later on St. Basil wrote: "Peter is made the foundation, for he had said: *Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God*, and in reply had heard himself addressed as a rock, though he was not a rock in the same sense as Christ, who is the rock truly immoveable. Peter is a rock, but only by virtue of that Rock. For God imparts His own prerogatives to men—He is a priest and He makes priests; He is the Rock; and He makes a rock,—thus making His servants participators in that which is His."³

¹ Matt. xvi. 18.

² John xx. 21.

³ At this point there is a lacuna in the text, due apparently to a curious typographical error. Having given the words of St. Basil, the Roman Catechism proceeds: "Lastly, St. Ambrose says"; but the quotation, which evidently should have followed, is not to be found in the earliest and best editions; and it has not been deemed advisable to attempt to supply it by one of the several passages which have been suggested by various editors.

13.—A visible Church requires a visible head. Should anyone object that the Church is sufficiently provided for with one Head and Spouse, Jesus Christ, and that she has need of no other, the answer is easy. Just as we hold Christ our Lord to be not only the Author, but also the invisible minister, of the Sacraments—He it is that baptizes and absolves—yet He has constituted men the ministers of the sacraments—so also, while Himself governing His Church by His invisible spirit, He has also placed a man at its head as His vicar and the minister of His power. A visible Church requires a visible head ; and hence it was that our Saviour made Peter head and pastor of all the faithful when He committed to him the feeding of His sheep in such ample terms that He willed the very same ample power of ruling the whole Church to descend to Peter's successors.

14.—Another reason why the Church is called one. Moreover, *there is one and the same Spirit*, says St. Paul to the Corinthians, who imparts grace to the faithful, as the soul communicates life to the members of the body. And writing to the Ephesians He exhorts them to preserve unity : *Be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ; one body and one spirit.*¹ For as the human body is composed of many members, and as all these are animated by one soul, which gives sight to the eyes, hearing to the ears, and their several powers to the other organs, so is the mystical body of Christ, which is His Church, composed of all the faithful.

One also is the hope to which we are called, as the Apostle testifies in the same place ; for we all hope for the same thing, that is, life eternally happy.

One, in fine, is the faith which all must hold and profess : *Let there be no schisms amongst you,*² says the Apostle. And along with our faith, *there is one baptism*, which is the seal of our Christian faith.

V.—THE CHURCH IS HOLY

15.—Second mark of the Church. The second mark of the Church is that of holiness : *You are a chosen generation, a holy nation,*³ says the Prince of the Apostles. Now, the Church is called holy for the following reasons :—

(a) Because she is consecrated and dedicated to God, as objects destined and dedicated to Divine worship are called holy,

¹ Eph. iv. 3.

² 1 Cor. i. 10.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

though they were merely material ; for instance, the vessels, vestments and altars of the Old Law ; in the Old Law, too, the first-born, who were dedicated to the Most High, were called holy.

Nor should it cause surprise that the Church, which, as we know, contains many sinners within her pale, is called holy. The faithful are called holy because they have been made the people of God, and have consecrated themselves to Christ by the profession of faith and the reception of baptism, even though they offend in many things and do not perform all they promise,—in the same way as they who profess an art are called artists, even though they do not observe all its rules. Hence St. Paul calls the Corinthians *sanctified* and *holy*, though it is certain that amongst them were some whom he sharply reproved as carnal, and worse.

(b) The Church is also called holy because she is united to her holy Head as His body, that is, to Christ our Lord, the source of all holiness, who pours forth on her the graces of the Holy Ghost, and the treasures of Divine bounty. Well does St. Augustine, in his commentary on the words of the Prophet : *Preserve my soul, for I am holy*,¹ say : “ Let the whole body of Christ, let that one man, be not afraid to raise his voice from all parts of the earth and boldly proclaim in unison with and under Christ his Head : ‘ I am holy ’ ; for he has received the grace of holiness, the grace of baptism, the grace of remission of sins.” A little further on in the same passage he adds : “ If it is true that all Christians and all the faithful have by their baptism put on Christ, according to the Apostle’s words : *As many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ* ;² if it is true they are made members of His body and yet dare to say they are not holy, they wrong that Head whose members are holy.”

(c) To this should be added that the Church, and the Church alone, possesses the legitimate worship of sacrifice, and the salutary use of the sacraments,—those efficacious instruments of Divine grace by which God communicates true holiness. Whoever, then, is truly holy cannot be outside this Church.

Clearly, then, the Church is holy, precisely because she is the body of Christ, by whom she is sanctified, and in whose blood she is cleansed.

¹ Ps. lxxxv. 2.

² Gal. iii. 27.

VI.—THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC

16.—The third mark of the Church. The third mark of the Church is that she is Catholic, that is, Universal—a title properly given her because, as St. Augustine remarks: “From the rising of the sun to its setting she is diffusing the light of one faith.”

(a) Unlike nations or peoples or sects, the Church is not confined to one kingdom, nor to any one race of men. She embraces in her loving bosom all mankind, be they barbarians or Scythians, be they slave or free, be they men or women. Hence it is written: *Thou hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom.*¹ It was of the Church that David said: *Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession.*² And: *I will be mindful of Rahab and of Babylon knowing Me; and: Man is born in her.*³

(b) Moreover, all the faithful, from Adam down to the present day, and to the very end of time, who profess the true faith, belong to this very Church: *Built upon the foundation of the apostles, prophets and*⁴ all of whom are founded and built upon the corner-stone, Christ, who made both one, and announced peace to them that were near and to them that were far.

(c) She is also called universal because that all who desire to attain everlasting salvation must cling to and embrace her like those of old who entered the Ark to escape perishing in the flood. The note of Catholicity, then, is one of the most reliable marks by which to discern the true Church from those that are false.

VII.—THE CHURCH IS APOSTOLIC

17.—The fourth mark of the Church. We also recognize the true Church by her origin, which we can trace back under the law of grace to the Apostles. For her teaching is truth itself, not new nor of recent growth, but delivered of old by the Apostles and spread by them over all the earth. And hence it unquestionably follows that the impious assertions of the heretics of these days are absolutely contrary to the teaching of the true faith, since they are opposed to the doctrine that has been taught by Christ from the days of the Apostles down

¹ Apoc. v. 9.² Ps. ii. 8.³ Ps. lxxxvi. 4, 5.⁴ Eph. ii. 20.

to our own day. Hence, that all might clearly distinguish which was the Catholic Church, the Fathers of the Council of Nice, guided by the Holy Spirit, inserted the word APOSTOLIC in the Creed. And, in fact, the Holy Spirit who presides over the Church governs that Church by none other than Apostolic ministers. This Spirit was first given to the Apostles; but through the infinite goodness of God has always continued to abide in the Church.

18.—The Church is infallible. And as this Church, simply because guided and directed by the Holy Ghost, cannot err in her teaching regarding faith and morals; so, on the contrary, all other societies, which usurp the name of Church, must necessarily, because led by the spirit of the devil, fall into errors highly inimical to faith and morals.

VIII.—FIGURES OF THE CHURCH

19.—In the Old Testament. The figures of the Old Testament are highly calculated to stir up the hearts of the faithful and recall most important truths to mind. Accordingly, the Apostles did not fail to make use of them; and therefore the pastor must not overlook so fruitful a source of instruction.

Of these figures, the Ark of Noah is an excellent example. Constructed by *divine command*,¹ there can be no doubt that it is a figure of the Church, which God has so constituted that whoever enters therein through the gates of baptism will be safe from danger of eternal death, while those who remain outside, as happened in the case of those who refused to take shelter in the Ark, shall be overwhelmed by their crimes.

Another figure is that of the great city of Jerusalem, a name which Sacred Scripture frequently employs to signify the Church. In Jerusalem alone was it lawful to offer sacrifice to God; just as it is only in the Church of God, and nowhere else, are to be found the true worship and true sacrifice at all acceptable to God.

IX.—BELIEF IN THE CHURCH AN ARTICLE OF FAITH

20.—In what sense? Finally, regarding the Church it must be explained whether, and how, our belief in the Church constitutes an article of faith. Although reason and our senses are sufficient to assure us of the existence of a Church on earth, that is to say, of a society of men dedicated

¹ Gen. vi. 14.

and consecrated to Christ our Lord ; and though faith would not seem necessary to convince us of a fact which not even Jews or Turks call into doubt ; yet it is by the light of faith alone, and not by any process of reasoning, that the mind is able to grasp those mysteries which—as has already been partly shown, and as will be further explained under the sacrament of Orders—are to be found in the Holy Church of God. Hence since this article, no less than the rest, surpasses the natural capacity and strength of our understanding, rightly do we confess that it is not by human reason, but with the eyes of faith, that we recognise the origin, offices, and dignity of the Church.

21.—Various truths to be believed regarding the Church. And, in truth, the founder of this Church was no man, but the immortal God Himself, who has built her upon a most firm rock : *The Highest Himself, said the Prophet, hath founded her.*¹

Therefore is she called : *The inheritance of God,*² and the *people* of God. The power given her is not human, but comes from God on high.³ And as this power cannot be of human origin, so is it faith alone that enables us to understand that in the Church are the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that to her has been committed the power of remitting sins, of excommunicating, of consecrating the real Body of Christ ; and that her citizens *have not here a lasting city, but seek one that is to come.*⁴

We are, then, strictly bound to believe that the Church is ONE, HOLY, and CATHOLIC.

22.—We are to believe *the Church* not *in* the Church. With regard to the Three Persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we not only believe them, but believe in them.

But in this article, the form of expression is not quite the same, for We profess to believe the *Holy* (not *IN* a Holy) Church ; and by this difference of expression we distinguish God, the Author of all things, from the things He has created, and we acknowledge that all the wonderful benefits bestowed on the Church are due to His divine goodness.

¹ Ps. lxxxvi. 5.

² Ps. ii. 8.

³ Ps. xxviii. 1.

⁴ Heb. xiii. 14.

THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

THE NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

I. THE CHURCH IN GENERAL

Q. What does the Ninth Article : "The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints," teach us ?

A. The Ninth Article of the *Creed* teaches us that Jesus Christ founded a visible society on earth called the Catholic Church, and that all those who belong to this Church are in communion with one another.

Q. Why immediately after the article that treats of the Holy Ghost is mention made of the Catholic Church ?

A. Immediately after the article that treats of the Holy Ghost mention is made of the Catholic Church to indicate that the Church's holiness comes from the Holy Ghost, who is the Author of all holiness.

Q. What does the word *Church* mean ?

A. The word *Church* means a calling forth or assembly of many.

Q. Who has convoked or called us into the Church of Jesus Christ ?

A. We have been called into the Church of Jesus Christ by a special grace of God, to the end, that

by the light of faith and the observance of the divine law, we may render Him the worship due to Him, and attain eternal life.

Q. Where are the members of the Church to be found ?

A. The members of the Church are found partly in heaven, forming the Church Triumphant ; partly in purgatory, forming the Church Suffering ; partly on earth, forming the Church Militant.

Q. Do these various parts of the Church constitute one sole Church ?

A. Yes, these various parts of the Church constitute one sole Church and one sole body ; for they have the same Head, Jesus Christ, the same Spirit animating and uniting them, and the same end, eternal happiness, which some already enjoy and the rest hope for.

Q. To which part of the Church does this Ninth Article principally refer ?

A. This Ninth Article of the *Creed* principally refers to the Church Militant, which is the Church we actually belong to.

2. THE CHURCH IN PARTICULAR

Q. What is the Catholic Church ?

A. The Catholic Church is the Union or Congregation of all the baptized who, still living on earth, profess the same Faith and the same

Law of Jesus Christ, participate in the same Sacraments, and obey their lawful Pastors, particularly the Roman Pontiff.

Q. State distinctly what is

necessary to be a member of the Church?

A. To be a member of the Church it is necessary to be baptized, to believe and profess the teaching of Jesus Christ, to participate in the same Sacraments, and to acknowledge the Pope and the other lawful pastors of the Church.

Q. Who are the lawful pastors of the Church?

A. The lawful pastors of the Church are the Roman Pontiff, that is, the Pope, who is supreme Pastor, and the Bishops. Other priests, also, and especially Parish Priests, have a share in the pastoral office, subject to the Bishop and the Pope.

Q. Why do you say that the Roman Pontiff is supreme Pastor of the Church?

A. Because Jesus Christ said to St. Peter, the first Pope: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven." And again: "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep."

Q. The many societies of persons who are baptized but who do not acknowledge the Roman Pontiff as their Head do not, then, belong to the Church of Jesus Christ?

A. No, those who do not acknowledge the Roman Pontiff as their Head do not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Q. How can the Church of Jesus Christ be distinguished from the numerous societies or sects founded by men, and calling themselves Christian?

A. From the numerous societies or sects founded by men and calling themselves Christian, the Church of

Jesus Christ is easily distinguished by four notes: She is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

Q. Why is the Church called *One*?

A. The true Church is called *One*, because her children of all ages and places are united together in the same faith, in the same worship, in the same law, and in participation of the same Sacraments, under the same visible Head, the Roman Pontiff.

Q. Can there not be several Churches?

A. No, there cannot be more churches than one; for as there is but one God, one Faith and one Baptism, there is and can be but one true Church.

Q. But are not the faithful of a whole Nation or Diocese also called a Church?

A. The faithful of a whole Nation or Diocese are also called a Church, but they ever remain mere parts of the Universal Church and form but one Church with her.

Q. Why is the true Church called *Holy*?

A. The true church is called *Holy* because holy is her Invisible Head, Jesus Christ; holy are many of her members; holy are her faith, her laws, her Sacraments; and outside of her there is not and cannot be true holiness.

Q. Why is the Church called *Catholic*?

A. The true Church is called *Catholic*, or Universal, because she embraces the faithful of all times, of all places, of all ages and conditions; and all peoples are called to belong to her.

Q. Why is the Church also called *Apostolic*?

A. The true Church is also called *Apostolic* because she goes back without break to the Apostles;

because she believes and teaches all that the Apostles believed and taught; and because she is guided and governed by their lawful successors.

Q. And why is the true Church called *Roman*?

A. The true Church is called *Roman*, because the four marks of Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity and Apostolicity are found in that Church alone which acknowledges as Head the Bishop of Rome, the Successor of St. Peter.

Q. What is the constitution of the Church of Jesus Christ?

A. The Church of Jesus Christ has been constituted as a true and perfect Society; and in her we can distinguish a soul and a body.

Q. In what does the Soul of the Church consist?

A. The Soul of the Church consists in her internal and spiritual endowments, that is, faith, hope, charity, the gifts of grace and of the Holy Ghost, together with all the heavenly treasures which are hers through the merits of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and of the Saints.

Q. In what does the Body of the Church consist?

A. The Body of the Church consists in her external and visible aspect, that is, in the association of her members, in her worship, in her teaching-power and in her external rule and government.

Q. To be saved, is it enough to be any sort of member at all of the Catholic Church?

A. No, to be saved it is not enough to be any sort of member of the Catholic Church; it is necessary to be a living member.

Q. Who are the living members of the Church?

A. The living members of the Church are the just, and the just

alone, that is, those who are actually in the grace of God.

Q. And who are the dead members?

A. The dead members of the Church are the faithful in mortal sin.

Q. Can one be saved outside the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church?

A. No, no one can be saved outside the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, just as no one could be saved from the flood out of the Ark of Noe, which was a figure of the Church.

Q. How, then, were the Patriarchs of old, the Prophets, and the other just men of the Old Testament, saved?

A. The just of the Old Testament were saved in virtue of the faith they had in Christ to come, by means of which they spiritually belonged to the Church.

Q. But if a man through no fault of his own is outside the Church, can he be saved?

A. If he is outside the Church through no fault of his, that is, if he is in good faith, and if he has received Baptism, or at least has the implicit desire of Baptism; and if, moreover, he sincerely seeks the truth and does God's will as best he can; such a man is indeed separated from the body of the Church, but is united to the soul of the Church and consequently is on the way of salvation.

Q. Suppose that a man is a member of the Catholic Church, but does not put her teaching in practice, will he be saved?

A. He who is a member of the Catholic Church and does not put her teaching in practice is a dead member, and hence will not be saved; for towards the salvation of an adult not only Baptism and faith are required, but, furthermore, works in keeping with faith.

Q. Are we obliged to believe all the truths the Church teaches us?

A. Yes, we are obliged to believe all the truths the Church teaches us, and Jesus Christ declares that he who does not believe is already condemned.

Q. Are we also obliged to do all that the Church commands?

A. Yes, we are obliged to do all that the Church commands, for Jesus Christ has said to the Pastors of the Church: "He who hears you, hears Me, and he who despises you, despises Me."

Q. Can the Church err in what she proposes for our belief?

A. No, the Church cannot err in what she proposes for our belief, since according to the promise of Jesus Christ she is unfailingly assisted by the Holy Ghost.

Q. Is the Catholic Church infallible, then?

A. Yes, the Catholic Church is infallible, and hence those who reject her definitions lose the faith and become heretics.

Q. Can the Catholic Church be destroyed or perish?

A. No; the Catholic Church may be persecuted, but she can never be destroyed or perish. She will last to the end of the world, because Jesus Christ, as He promised, will be with her to the end of time.

Q. Why is the Catholic Church so persecuted?

A. The Catholic Church is so persecuted because even her Divine Founder, Jesus Christ, was thus persecuted, and because she reproves vice, combats the passions, and condemns all acts of injustice and all errors.

Q. Has a Catholic any other duties towards the Church?

A. Every Catholic ought to have a boundless love for the Church, ought to consider himself infinitely honoured and happy in belonging to her, and ought to labour for her glory and advancement by every means in his power.

3. THE CHURCH TEACHING AND THE CHURCH TAUGHT

Q. Is there any distinction between the members of the Church?

A. There is a very notable distinction between the members of the Church; for there are some who rule and some who obey; some who teach and some who are taught.

Q. How do you call that part of the Church which teaches?

A. That part of the Church which teaches is called the *Teaching Church*.

Q. How do you call that part of the Church which is taught?

A. That part of the Church

which is taught is called the *Learning Church*, or the *Church Taught*.

Q. Who has set up this distinction in the Church?

A. Jesus Christ Himself has established this distinction in the Church.

Q. Are the Church Teaching and the Church Taught, then, two Churches?

A. The Church Teaching and the Church Taught are two distinct parts of one and the same Church, just as in the human body the head is distinct from the other members

and yet forms but one body with them.

Q. Of whom is the Teaching Church composed ?

A. The Teaching Church is composed of all the Bishops, with the Roman Pontiff at their head, be they dispersed throughout the world or assembled together in Council.

Q. And the Church Taught, of whom is it composed ?

A. The Church Taught is composed of all the faithful.

Q. Who, then, are they who possess the teaching power in the Church ?

A. The teaching power in the Church is possessed by the Pope and the Bishops, and, dependent on them, by the other sacred ministers.

Q. Are we obliged to hear the Teaching Church ?

A. Yes, without doubt we are obliged under pain of eternal dam-

nation to hear the Teaching Church ; for Jesus Christ has said to the Pastors of His Church, in the persons of the Apostles : " He who hears you, hears Me, and he who despises you, despises Me. "

Q. Besides her teaching power has the Church any other power ?

A. Yes, besides her teaching power the Church has in particular the power of administering sacred things, of making laws and of exacting the observance of them.

Q. Does the power possessed by the members of the Hierarchy come from the people ?

A. The power possessed by the Hierarchy does not come from the people, and it would be heresy to say it did : it comes solely from God.

Q. To whom does the exercise of this power belong ?

A. The exercise of this power belongs solely to the Hierarchy, that is, to the Pope and to the Bishops subordinate to him.

4. THE POPE AND THE BISHOPS

Q. Who is the Pope ?

A. The Pope, who is also called the Sovereign Pontiff, or the Roman Pontiff, is the Successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and the visible Head of the Church.

Q. Why is the Roman Pontiff the Successor of St. Peter ?

A. The Roman Pontiff is the Successor of St. Peter because St. Peter united in his own person the dignity of Bishop of Rome and that of Head of the Church ; by divine disposition he established his Seat at Rome, and there died ; hence, whosoever is elected Bishop of Rome is also heir to all his authority.

Q. Why is the Roman Pontiff the Vicar of Jesus Christ ?

A. The Roman Pontiff is the Vicar of Jesus Christ because He represents Him on earth and acts in His stead in the government of the Church.

Q. Why is the Roman Pontiff the Visible Head of the Church ?

A. The Roman Pontiff is the Visible Head of the Church because he visibly governs her with the authority of Jesus Christ Himself, who is her invisible Head.

Q. What, then, is the dignity of the Pope ?

A. The dignity of the Pope is the greatest of all dignities on earth,

and gives him supreme and immediate power over all and each of the Pastors and of the faithful.

Q. Can the Pope err when teaching the Church ?

A. The Pope cannot err, that is, he is infallible, in definitions regarding faith and morals.

Q. How is it that the Pope is infallible ?

A. The Pope is infallible because of the promise of Jesus Christ, and of the unfailing assistance of the Holy Ghost.

Q. When is the Pope infallible ?

A. The Pope is infallible when, as Pastor and Teacher of all Christians and in virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by all the Church.

Q. What sin would a man commit who should refuse to accept the solemn definitions of the Pope ?

A. He who refuses to accept the solemn definitions of the Pope, or who even doubts them, sins against faith ; and should he remain obstinate in this unbelief, he would no longer be a Catholic, but a heretic.

Q. Why has God granted to the Pope the gift of infallibility ?

A. God has granted the Pope the gift of infallibility in order that we all may be sure and certain of the truths which the Church teaches.

Q. When was it defined that the Pope is infallible ?

A. That the Pope is infallible was defined by the Church in the Vatican Council ; and should anyone presume to contradict this definition he would be a heretic and excommunicated.

Q. In defining that the Pope is infallible, has the Church put forward a new truth of faith ?

A. No, in defining that the Pope is infallible the Church has not put forward a new truth of faith ; but to oppose new errors she has simply defined that the infallibility of the Pope, already contained in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition, is a truth revealed by God, and therefore to be believed as a dogma or article of faith.

Q. How should every Catholic act towards the Pope ?

A. Every Catholic must acknowledge the Pope as Father, Pastor, and Universal Teacher, and be united with him in mind and heart.

Q. After the Pope, who are they who by Divine appointment are to be most venerated in the Church ?

A. After the Pope, those who by Divine appointment are to be most venerated in the Church are the Bishops.

Q. Who are the Bishops ?

A. The Bishops are the pastors of the faithful, placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God in the Sees entrusted to them, in dependence on the Roman Pontiff.

Q. What is a Bishop in his own diocese ?

A. A Bishop in his own diocese is the lawful Pastor, the Father, the Teacher, the Superior of all the faithful, ecclesiastic and lay belonging to his diocese.

Q. Why is the Bishop called the lawful Pastor ?

A. The Bishop is called the lawful Pastor because the jurisdiction, or the power which he has to govern the faithful of his diocese, is conferred upon him according to the laws and regulations of the Church.

Q. To whom do the Pope and the Bishops succeed ?

A. The Pope is the Successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the

Apostles ; and the Bishops are the Successors of the Apostles, in all that regards the ordinary government of the Church.

Q. Must the faithful be in union with their Bishop ?

A. Yes, all the faithful, ecclesiastic and lay, should be united heart and soul with their Bishop, who is in favour and communion with the Apostolic See.

Q. How should the faithful act towards their own Bishop ?

A. Each one of the faithful, both ecclesiastic and lay, should revere, love and honour his own Bishop and render him obedience in all that regards the care of souls and the spiritual government of the diocese.

Q. By whom is the Bishop assisted in the care of souls ?

A. The Bishop is assisted in the care of souls by priests, and especially by Parish Priests.

Q. Who is the Parish Priest ?

A. The Parish Priest is a priest deputed to preside over and direct with due dependence on his Bishop a portion of the diocese called a parish.

Q. What are the duties of the faithful towards their Parish Priest ?

A. The faithful should be united with their Parish Priest, listen to him with docility, and show him respect and submission in all that regards the care of the parish.

Twenty-seventh Instruction on the Creed

ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GENERAL.

THE greatest work of the Divine Paraclete on earth was that of enlightening and strengthening the Apostles to spread the Church which had been founded by Jesus Christ. And hence, after having in the preceding articles made profession of faith in the Holy Ghost, the Apostles' Creed proceeds at once to propose to our belief the Holy Catholic Church, coupled with the Communion of Saints, which is a necessary consequence thereof.

After God the Father, who has created the world and who rules it by His all-wise laws ; after Jesus Christ our Lord, the only and eternal Son of God, who became man in time and redeemed us by His blood ; after the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son and who sanctifies us by infusing divine love into our souls : there is not in the whole Creed a subject more important than that now about to occupy our attention, that is to say, the Holy Catholic Church. And hence it is that the Roman Catechism directs pastors to explain to their flocks with the greatest care and zeal the various truths connected therewith, so as to arm them against the devices and snares of the evil one, and enable them to abide securely in the true faith.

The word *Church* has various meanings ; and hence, before proceeding further, it will be necessary for us to have a clear idea of the sense in which the word is used in the Ninth Article of the Creed.

First of all, the word *Church* denotes a building, or edifice, or temple dedicated to divine worship. The word *chapel* is sometimes used to signify the same thing. There is no need to point out that this is not the meaning of the word as used in the Creed.

Sometimes the word has the meaning of *denomination* or *sect*, as when we speak of the Protestant Church, the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Episcopalian Church, the Methodist Church the Wesleyan Church. Neither is this the meaning to be attached to the word in the Creed.

Again, it is used to distinguish the faithful of one nation from

those of another. Thus we often speak of the Irish Church, the French Church, the American Church, meaning thereby the ecclesiastical organization and the whole body of the faithful in each of these countries. Neither is this the sense in which we use the word when we make profession of our belief in the Holy Catholic Church.

In itself the word Church originally denoted a reunion, an assembly, not gathered together merely by chance, but duly convened or convoked. In Christian usage, however, it was and is restricted to signify the whole collective body of the faithful who believe in Jesus Christ and accept all His teaching.

Thus understood, the Church is divided into three great parts : the Church *triumphant*, the members of which have already attained the bliss of heaven ; the Church *suffering*, the members of which are now in Purgatory ; and the Church *militant*, the members of which are still on earth, struggling against the allurements and errors of the world, against the malice and strength of the passions, and against the temptations of the devil. For the present, the Church militant alone concerns us.

Being a congregation, an assembly, of human beings, the Church must have leaders, members, and a common end and aim. Now, its leaders have been instituted by Jesus Christ to govern His Church ; they constitute what is known as the Teaching Church ; and their duty is to lead the faithful, who constitute the *Church Taught*, to the common end of all, which is the happiness of heaven.

If this is clearly grasped, it will at once be evident that by the word Church we Catholics mean a religious society or body composed of all the faithful on earth, and founded by our Lord Jesus Christ to preserve His doctrine, observe His laws, and, under the authority of His representatives, to lead man to his last end, that is to say, life everlasting ; or, to express it in other words, the Church is the collective body of those on earth who are united in the profession of the same Christian faith, participate in the same sacraments, and are governed by lawful pastors under the supreme authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. Later on we shall see how correct is this description ; for the present, however, we simply take it for granted, so as to convey a general idea of what is meant by the Church.

A Catholic, then, is one who is a member of this society, one who is baptized, believes and professes the doctrines of Jesus Christ, participates in the sacraments duly administered in that society, and acknowledges the authority of the Pope and the other legitimate pastors of the Church. There are indeed many who, though members

of the Church in name, do not put her teaching in practice ; but these are mere dead members, and unless they change their attitude they are certain to be lost. To be a genuine Catholic it is not enough to be baptized and have the faith,—it is also necessary to lead a life in keeping with that faith. He who enlists under the banner of Christ must be prepared to comply with the conditions that Christ requires of His soldiers.

So much in general regarding the definition of the Church. Let us now enter a little further into details, and determine how that Church is constituted, what are the conditions of membership, and what the advantages derived therefrom.

(1) Jesus Christ came on earth to save all men to the end of time. He could, indeed, had He so willed, have remained on earth and carried out His divine mission in person. But, as He did not so will, He selected from amongst His followers a chosen body of men, and ere leaving this world to go to the Father, He said to them: *As the Father hath sent Me, so I also send you.*¹ *Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*² *Teach ye all nations . . . teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded unto you ;* and as a guarantee of their ability to discharge the apparently impossible task thus imposed on them He added the consoling assurance: *Behold I am with you all days even to the end of the world.*³ Not only this but He promised that as soon as He should have returned to the Father He would send the Spirit of Truth to teach them all things, to bring to their minds all things whatsoever He had said to them, and to abide with them for ever. It was in virtue of this solemn commission and this solemn promise of help in its execution that St. Paul unreservedly claimed that men were to regard the Apostles as *the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God*;⁴ while the highest praise He could bestow on the people of Thessalonía was this: that *when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but, as it really is, the word of God.*⁵

Now, from all this it should be plain that our Lord established within His Church a special body of men to carry on His mission, by preaching, teaching, instructing, and by procuring the accurate observance of His law and doctrine, that is to say, a special body of men, having authority to teach, administer sacraments, and govern the general body, so much so, indeed, that their decisions and regulations

¹ John xx. 21.

² Mark xvi. 15, 16.

³ Math. xxviii. 19, 20.

⁴ 1 Cor. iv. 1.

⁵ Thess. ii. 13

were to be ratified in heaven. It is as clear as noonday, then, that in His Church our Lord intended there should be two great classes—the teachers and the taught, the governing and the governed, the pastors and the flock. And accordingly in the Catholic Church, from its very infancy down to the present day, we find that the Church resembles a human being in this, that she is composed of head and members,—the members being the faithful at large, who are called the *Church Taught*, while the head, which is also called the *Church Teaching*, is composed of all the Bishops of the earth, under the supreme authority of the Pope—so that the teaching authority in the Church is entrusted to the Pope and the Bishops, and in dependence on them, to the other sacred ministers of the Church. And just as the head and members constitute but one body, so the *Church Teaching* and the *Church Taught* are but two distinct parts of one and the selfsame Church.

Thus, then, does it happen that in the Church we find on the one hand the faithful in general, and, on the other hand, over them, to teach and rule them, we have priests, Bishops and Pope—the priest being charged with the care of his parish, the Bishop with the care of his diocese, while the Pope has care of the whole Church of God on earth.

Later on we shall discuss all this in greater detail ; but for the present it will be enough to remember that the mission entrusted by our Lord to the Teaching Church involves the power of preaching and teaching the word of God ; the power of conferring grace by means of the Sacraments ; the power of laying down laws conducive to the end for which the Church has been established ; and the power of punishing in a suitable way those of her children who refuse to obey her decrees.

(2) As regards the conditions necessary for membership of the Church it will be sufficient for the present to point out that they are three : Profession of the same faith, participation in the same sacraments, and obedience to the Vicar of Christ on earth ; and hence it will be clear that the Church does not embrace in her bosom heretics publicly known to be such, manifest schismatics, the unbaptized, pagans, notorious apostates, and those whom she declares to be excommunicated. Thus pagans are outside the Church because they have never received Baptism, which is the door leading into the Church ; heretics and schismatics because, though baptized, they have embraced errors and false doctrines, and have hence abandoned the Church as the deserter the army to which he once belonged ; the excommunicated because the Church cuts them off and rejects them

from her bosom until such time as they shall consent to do penance for their misdeeds.

Later on we shall dwell on the distinction that exists between the body and soul of the Church, and we shall point out how it is that one may belong to the soul of the Church without being actually in the body of the Church, and on the contrary how one may belong to the body of the Church without belonging to the soul. For the present it will be sufficient to note that Catholics actually in a state of mortal sin belong to the body though not to the soul of the Church. But though infinitely inferior to those who belong both to the body and soul of the Church, yet, inasmuch as they profess the true faith and are capable of participating in the sacraments and the other advantages held forth by the Church to all her members, their state is far superior to those who are altogether outside the Church. For the moment they repent, confess their sins to a duly authorized priest, and receive absolution at his hands, sanctifying grace is poured into their souls and they too at once belong not merely to the body but also to the soul of the Church. The great difference, then, between those who are Catholics only outwardly, and those who are Catholics in spirit and in truth, consists in this, that the latter are in a state of grace while the former are in a state of mortal sin. But of this more later on.

(3) And now what advantages do we derive from being members of the Catholic Church? Jesus Christ came on earth to teach men the way of salvation; and the Church continues that work in His name and by His authority. Jesus Christ came to merit for us and to pour into our hearts the grace that sanctifies us, confirms us, strengthens the natural weakness of the will; and the Church continues to dispense that grace to all those who seek it in the sacraments. In a word, the Church is the continuation of the work of Jesus Christ on earth; in other words, it is Jesus Christ Himself who through the instrumentality of the Church continues the work of teaching, reconciling, sanctifying, transforming, and saving the souls of men; in the Church is perpetuated the mission of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race.

Thus, hardly were we born when the Church, acting in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, stretched out her bountiful hands towards us, poured over us the saving waters of baptism, and made us Christians, children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven. A few years pass, and then comes the knowledge of good and evil, and with it the awful capacity of distinguishing between

right and wrong, and hence of offending God. But, thanks be to God, the Church is still at hand to raise us up, should we fall,—she holds out to us the sacrament of penance to cleanse our souls and restore them to their baptismal innocence on the single condition that we repent and make a good confession to one of her duly authorized ministers. Later on she confirms us, strengthening us to face the trials and temptations the world has in store for us: while in the Blessed Eucharist she gives us heavenly food to nourish our souls; and finally, when life's fitful fever is drawing to a close, she approaches the bedside, in the person of her minister, settles all past accounts, and prepares us to face that journey from the time that now is to the unending years of eternity.

(4) And now what are our duties towards the Church?—to that holy Catholic Church which, as St. Paul says, is the spouse of Christ; to that Church which is our mother; which has brought us forth to a new life by Baptism; which teaches and guides us; which nourishes us with the sacraments; which rules us and leads us along the path to the kingdom of the blessed?

First of all, we owe her sincere *love*. Let us not forget that we ought to love her who is Christ's spouse, whom He loves with surpassing love. She is our mother—our tender, loving, provident mother; and being so, is it not just that she should be dearly loved by the children whom she holds so dear? Would it not be unnatural to be cold towards her, or indifferent to her interests, or forgetful of her claims, or careless as to her welfare.

In the second place, we owe her *obedience*. A good son would never dream of disobeying his mother; while a disobedient son is at once set down as a bad son. Now, our Lord tells us that not only is the disobedient son of the Church a bad son, but that he is to be rejected and held aloof by all: *He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.*

Let us, then, recognize the greatness of the blessing that is ours in being members of the holy Catholic Church,—a blessing conferred on us in preference to millions of others, without any special merit on our part, but purely and simply by the goodness and mercy of God. He who is born in a false religion can, indeed, be converted to the true religion; but experience clearly shows that only too rarely are men able to conquer the prejudices of birth and education. Let us, then, be grateful to God; let us use that great blessing in the way that He wishes; for of what avail would it be to us to be children of a holy Church if we ourselves were unholy! To be saved, it is not

enough to be born in, and to live in, the true Church : we must profess the true faith and practise its teaching. It is not enough to belong to the body of the Church and to go through a few mere material observances : we must, in addition to this, participate in the spirit and soul of the Church by rectitude and holiness of life. It is not enough merely to be in the Church : we must also bear good fruit, and not be mere barren fig-trees cumbering the ground.

See the crops as they spring over ground,—the tares grow up side by side with the wheat. But harvest comes, the tares are separated from the wheat and are cast into the fire. Such is the figure by which our Lord shows what shall one day happen with regard to the members of the Church. The Church embraces within her bosom the bad as well as the good here on earth ; but the day will come when the good shall be separated from the bad, when these shall at once be cast into the devouring fires of hell for ever and ever, while the good—those who have made good use of the opportunities God has given them in making them members of His Church—shall be numbered for all eternity amongst the blessed in heaven.

Let this thought never leave our minds,—it will stimulate and encourage us to correspond properly with the graces given us, and it will truly make us lead a life such as God and the Church require of us—that is to say, a life pure, holy and immaculate.

Twenty-eighth Instruction on the Creed

THE WITNESSES TO THE TRUE CHURCH

IN our last instruction we took a general view of what we mean when we profess our belief in the holy Catholic Church. We saw what the word Church denotes—that is to say, the collective body of the faithful united in the profession of the Christian faith, in the reception of the same sacraments, and in obedience to their lawful pastors under the supreme authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. We saw what is meant by the *Church Teaching*, and what by the *Church Taught*,—these two great parts which make up the Church of God ; we also examined the Church's mission and saw that it is to continue and carry on the mission of Christ Himself ; we then dwelt on the various advantages derived from membership in the Church ; and, finally, the duties and obligations incumbent on us with regard thereto.

So far we have viewed the Church in the light of faith ; but as there is no article of Catholic teaching so bitterly attacked as that regarding the Catholic Church, it is highly important that every good and serious-minded Catholic should be able to give a reasonable account of his faith in this respect, or at least be able to satisfy his own mind and fortify it against the many and bitter attacks that are unceasingly being made by the gates of hell against the Spouse of Christ. Accordingly, in this and the following instructions we shall investigate, step by step, what exactly was the means selected by our Lord to continue and carry on His mission on earth ; and having determined what that means was, we shall then proceed to identify it as it was in the beginning, as it has been throughout the ages, as it is to-day, and as it shall be to the end of time.

Looked at from another point of view, this inquiry is equally important. Of the four hundred millions who profess, or claim to believe in, the divinity of our Saviour, and to belong to the Church founded by Him, close on one hundred and fifty millions are divided from all the rest by tenets and practices of an utterly different nature. To take a few examples : Catholics hold that the regular means established by Christ for obtaining pardon of one's sins is by contritely

confessing them to a duly authorized priest, and receiving absolution at his hands ; Protestants in general regard such confession as an abomination that should have no place in Christian life. Catholics believe that the moment the priest at the altar pronounces the words of consecration, our Lord Jesus Christ becomes truly, really and substantially present under the species of bread and wine ; Protestants in general reject such a belief as utterly impossible, absurd, and even blasphemous. Catholics believe that there is no holier act of adoration than that paid to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament ; Protestants look on such adoration as rank idolatry. Catholics believe that the Pope is the infallible head of the Church ; Protestants will hear of nothing of the kind. Catholics believe that the Mass is a real sacrifice instituted by Christ ; Protestants look on the Mass as superstitious and as an act of rank idolatry. Catholics believe that Extreme Unction and Matrimony are real sacraments, conferring grace ; Protestants stoutly maintain that they are not sacraments at all.

All these points of difference are clearly of the most fundamental and far-reaching nature ; and it cannot but be clear that if Catholics are right, Protestants are wrong ; while, on the contrary, if Protestants are in the right Catholics are just as clearly in the wrong. Now, this tremendous difference of belief and practice arises from the fact that while Catholics take as their guide that teaching body which, as they believe, Christ permanently established in His Church, Protestants claim that our only guide must be the writings of the Old and New Testaments, commonly called the Bible,—that all that each one is bound to do is to take his own meaning from these writings, and shape his belief and practice accordingly.

It is clear, then, that the very first thing to be done is to determine which is the genuine guide we are to follow ; and it must be equally clear that, to do so, all that has to be done is to ascertain our Lord's mind in this respect. When, then, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascending into heaven, deprived men of His visible presence and of that living voice that had fallen so often on their ears in burning accents of love, how did He provide for the unborn generations, for the countless millions of souls, that were to come after Him and whom He had come to save, just as He had come to save those actually then living ? How did He arrange that His teaching was to reach them, and to reach them not merely in a vague, uncertain way, but thoroughly, reliably, and in a manner suitable to their nature ?

To attempt a safe answer to this all-important question, we must dwell for a few moments on a preliminary consideration. It is this :

in deciding on past events, or on events of which we have no personal knowledge, we base our judgment on the testimony furnished by reliable witnesses. Thus, suppose we desire to know the mind of one of the world's great leaders or rulers—O'Connell, Washington, Napoleon, Alfred the Great, Julius Cæsar, and so on—we first of all turn to his own writings, if he happens to have left any behind him ; then, to the accounts handed down by those who knew him intimately, or had sufficient opportunities of knowing his mind, and who, in other respects, are known to be well-informed and trustworthy. That our Lord Himself did not commit His teaching to writing is a matter of common knowledge ; but fortunately we possess the writings of those who knew Him well, who passed years of their lives in His company, who were His intimate friends, and who were carefully instructed by Him regarding His mind and mission during the three years that preceded His death. These writings, as you know, are contained in the New Testament.

Small though the New Testament is in volume, it is not, as you are aware, the work of one hand,—eight inspired writers have contributed each his part to the two hundred and sixty chapters of which it is composed. Of these eight, six were Apostles—Matthew, John, James, Peter, Jude, Paul ; while the remaining two—Mark and Luke—though not Apostles, were the disciples and intimate friends of the Apostles. Again, these writings are of two great classes : those in the form of letters ; and those of a historical nature. Most of the letters were written by St. Paul ; while the writings of a historical nature were composed by the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and are generally referred to as “ The Gospel according to St. Matthew,” or St. Mark, or St. Luke, or St. John, each of which aims at giving a general but succinct outline of our Saviour's life and teaching.

The mark of truth is stamped on every page of the four Gospels. The simplicity and candour manifested therein have no parallel in any other book that has ever been written. The writers seem to be utterly unmindful of themselves and of their personality—not one of them speaks of himself, or obtrudes his own personality, in any way, though two of them were actual witnesses to the events they relate. In not one of the four Gospels will you find a bitter word—nay, not even a cry of anger—against the calumniators, the persecutors, the executioners of their Leader, Jesus Christ. They simply narrate facts, report discourses, without the least attempt at art—so much so that it may be said that they seem perfectly indifferent with regard to what

they narrate: their narratives would almost seem as if they had been dictated by children telling what they have seen and heard—neither a word too much nor a word too little. Read the Sermon on the Mount, read the story of the Samaritan woman, read the account of the Last Supper, read the narrative of the Passion—you will find no complaint, no invective, no exclamation of pain or wonder,—facts, and facts alone, pass before you without pomp or array, but simply as they took place. The writers never appear in the foreground,—you would almost say that they have no passions, no feelings, no thoughts, no fears, no affections, no existence—the figure of our Lord alone stands forth from their speaking pages. In one word, all is natural, all is unaffected, all is concise, and the conviction cannot be got rid of, though many would wish to do so, that these books tell the truth, tell what the writers have seen and heard and know to be true; and hence must be taken as thoroughly reliable witnesses regarding the life and teaching and mind of the Saviour whom they knew so well and by whom they had been treated so kindly.

And, in fact, for almost eighteen hundred years Christianity has accepted the Gospels as genuine, trustworthy accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Neither heresy nor schism, ancient or modern, ever cast the smallest doubt on the point. And if, during the past hundred years, many attempts have been made to discredit their trustworthiness and accuracy, these attempts have not only miserably failed, but have contributed to render that trustworthiness better and better established.

A similar conclusion applies to the remaining parts of the New Testament. Thus, the *Acts of the Apostles*, which is, so to say, the continuation of the Gospel of St. Luke, contains an account of the first years of Christianity, and especially of the labours of St. Peter and St. Paul in spreading the Gospel. Similar, too, must be our estimate of the Letters of St. Paul and of the other Apostles, which were written by them from time to time, and as occasion served, for the instruction or edification of the first Christian converts. Though not historical treatises, they faithfully reflect the convictions of the writers; so that whenever they lay down that such or such was the mind of our Lord, we are bound in all sincerity to accept their testimony without the slightest demur.

Again, if with regard to a great movement we wish to know still more than that which is supplied by the writings of those who were intimate with him who founded it, we naturally attach great weight to the words and writings of those who lived in the next and

subsequent generations, who were intimate with those who were his companions and followers, who in their own day were the recognized leaders of that movement, or who were in a position to know the conditions required for membership therein, and what exactly were its nature, scope and methods.

Now, with regard to that great movement which we know as Christianity, our first witnesses were, as we have seen, the Evangelists and Apostles whose writings have come down to us. But second only in importance to these we have the writings of many others who came after them. Of these, some lived and wrote in the lifetime of the Apostles or shortly after, were directly connected with the Apostles, and are hence known as the *Apostolic Fathers*. These were St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Polycarp of Smyrna, St. Barnabas, the Pastor Hermas, Papias, and the writer of the Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles. It is needless to observe that, after the Apostles and Evangelists themselves, there could be no more unexceptional witnesses than the Apostolic Fathers. To take an example: St. Ignatius had intimate relations with some of the Apostles, by whom he had been constituted Bishop of Antioch. In his old age he was condemned to die, was brought from Antioch to Rome, and suffered martyrdom there about the year 107. On his journey he was allowed to write some letters to various Christian communities, or dioceses, in which he exhorted them to unity and to perseverance in the teaching of our Saviour. Now, it is as certain as certain can be that any statement made by this great Bishop and martyr, with regard to our Lord's teaching, is deserving of the very highest respect and consideration, especially under such circumstances; and he would be a bold man indeed who should venture to assert that St. Ignatius wrote a single word that did not reflect the mind and teaching of Jesus Christ.

After the Apostolic Fathers come the great Apologists of the second century, that is to say, those great writers and leaders who stood forth to defend the faith against calumny and prejudice, and against the attacks that were being made on it by the pagans of the day; and who not only defended the faith, but established the truth of the Christian belief. Here, again, there is no need to point out that every statement of Christian doctrine by those intrepid and enlightened defenders of the faith is worthy of the highest respect, and forms an unexceptional guide to the teaching of our Lord and to the actual belief of the Church in their day. Of these, two names stand out prominently:

that of St. Justin, who won the martyr's crown in the year 165; and of St. Irenæus, who suffered martyrdom in the year 177.

The third century saw the rise of that long series of writers who studied and expounded Christianity in a scientific manner, dwelling exhaustively on certain points of Christian teaching, or on the whole body of Christian doctrine. Their works attained the widest publicity. When, then, we find them laying down without contradiction any particular point as forming part of that teaching, we may be quite certain that they are simply reflecting and repeating the belief that was held by the Christians of the age in which they lived. Foremost amongst these great champions and leaders stand the names of St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage in Africa, who laid down his life for the faith, St. Hippolytus of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, and the great but unhappy Tertullian.

Then came the time when the days of persecution were at an end, and when the Church and her champions could stand out fearlessly in the full light of day to proclaim and expound with an authoritative voice the saving truths that had been handed down to them from their predecessors in the faith. A long list of glorious names decorates the fourth and fifth centuries—centuries which, on their account, are known as the golden age of the Fathers—of Saints Hilary and Ambrose and Jerome and Augustine and Leo the Great and Athanasius and Basil and the two Gregorys and the two Cyrils and, last but not least, the golden-tongued Chrysostom. Of these it is sufficient to remark that they are all anterior to the year 460; that they were all recognized leaders in the Church; that they were separated by only a few hundred years from those who had actually been acquainted with the Apostles and their immediate followers; and hence that they were undeniably in a position to pronounce definitely and authoritatively on any point that called for their attention. In one word, individually each one of these cannot but be regarded as a trustworthy witness; while their combined testimony on any particular point of Christian teaching cannot be regarded as other than simply overwhelming and decisive.

We have now seen the chief witnesses on whom we must rely if we wish to determine the means established by Christ our Lord to preserve His doctrine and to save souls until His second coming. These witnesses, we have seen, are, first and foremost, the writers of the New Testament, and especially the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; next the Apostolic Fathers, who had direct relations with the Apostles themselves; next the writers of the second century, who

stood out to defend the teaching of Christ against the prejudices of pagans and against the inroads of heretics ; next the writers of the third century ; and finally the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, who spent their lives in expounding the true teaching of Christ and in setting it forth in all the fullness of a systematic body of doctrine—great Bishops, great champions, great doctors, great leaders of the Church of God.

In our next instruction we shall begin to examine these witnesses, so as to ascertain for ourselves what was the course actually followed by our Lord, what was His intention, what was the plan He adopted to carry on His mission on earth when He Himself should have returned to the Father. Let us in the meanwhile beg of God for light to recognize His holy ways, so as to stand firm in the faith as well as to be able to defend the true Church of Christ against the calumnies and aspersions daily cast on her

Twenty-ninth Instruction on the Creed

THE MEANS CHOSEN BY OUR LORD TO PERPETUATE HIS MISSION

I am the way, the truth, and the life, said our Lord Jesus Christ ; *I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly*. What that life which He came to give to men really means, He Himself has taken care to explain : *This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.*¹

But how did He propose to bring this knowledge securely within the reach of all men, implant it in their hearts, propagate and preserve it intact throughout all generations down to the end of time ? What agency, what instrument, what means, did He select to carry on His work when He Himself should have gone ?

As long as He remained on earth, He alone sufficed—from Him alone could the heavenly truths He came to teach be received. But how many actually heard these truths falling from His own very lips ! At most, a small band of men, within a narrow region, and during a very brief period of time. And then came the day when His bodily presence was lost even to them, and with it His words and the sound of His voice. What, then, was to become of other men—of the countless millions then unborn ? How were they to be provided for ? If His divine word was to be the common inheritance of all, if He had come, as He proclaimed, to save all men, how did He propose to communicate to all men and all generations the teaching He had delivered by word of mouth during the three years He dwelt in the midst of His Apostles along the shores of Lake Galilee ?

Obviously it could only be in one of three ways : (1) By speaking directly to the heart, illuminating the mind, and inspiring each individual soul with a knowledge of the truths of salvation ; or (2) by putting in each one's hand a manual, a code, a book, drawn up by Himself or under His direction, containing His whole teaching, and forming an unerring guide to His truths, a reliable and sufficient standard according to which each one was to regulate his life and

¹ John xvii. 3.

conduct ; or (3) by setting up and leaving behind Him in His place, and as His authorized representative, a body of men entrusted with the continuation of His work of teaching and of saving souls. Clearly no other way than one of these three can be imagined ; one of them, then, must have been selected ; and now arises the all-important question : Which of these three did He actually select ?

Before proceeding to give a direct answer it will be well to remember that, as He was omnipotent, He could have selected any one of the three. The end of His mission being to make known to all men and all generations the saving truths of salvation, it will readily be seen that in His omnipotence He could, did He so will, communicate His truths directly to every child of Adam, without need of any intermediary between Himself and the human soul. As He creates the soul directly and without any outward agency, so can He, if He so wills, speak directly to that soul and convey to it the truths He came on earth to teach.

In the same way, being all-wise, assuredly He could have drawn up, or directed to be drawn up, a book or code or manual, containing in the clearest and most unmistakable way each and every truth necessary to salvation.

But the question is, not what He could have done, but what He actually did ; not what way He could have chosen, but what way He actually did select and establish as the means by which mankind must come to a knowledge of His truths. As God was able to feed the Jews on the manna that He rained down directly from heaven, so could He feed our souls with the food of His heavenly doctrine without the help of any human agency ; but as the fact that He is able to send food to man directly from heaven does not imply that He actually does do this, so in like manner the fact that He is able to enlighten us and teach us the truths of salvation without any human intermediary is far from being equivalent to a proof that such is the means He has actually chosen.

(1) And now, did Jesus Christ arrange that every human soul was to depend on inspiration for a knowledge of the truths of salvation ? Let us consult our witnesses. The answer is simple : in all the New Testament there is not one word, not one phrase, not one sentence, that can be taken to bear out such a notion. You may read the New Testament from cover to cover, you may scrutinize every page and every line, and you will not find the remotest indication that our Lord selected any such way as the means by which men in general were to attain to a knowledge of the truths of salvation.

Again, if God had established inspiration, or revelation conveyed directly to each soul, as the means of communicating the truths of faith, it would follow that all men should possess these truths in an equal degree and with equal security and certainty. The sun's light is one and the same, and shines on all things equally; and if all things are not equally illumined, the fault is not due to the sun, but to the different media through which his rays pass. In the same way if God had decreed to illumine the human soul directly by inspiration and without any intermediary, He should of His very nature be obliged to pour into every soul the light of all the truths He has deigned to reveal to any one. For God wishes all men to be saved, that is, He wishes all men to know and do His will; and if that knowledge depends altogether on inspiration from Him, it would follow, as a necessary consequence of God's justice, that He should inspire all men with an equal knowledge of His truths. Yet, as we know, not all men, not all times, have come to a knowledge of these truths; and hence it is clear that between God and the soul there must be some intermediary through which a knowledge of these truths is conveyed. In other words, the only possible explanation as to why some receive the light of truth and others do not, though all the time God wishes all men to be saved, must be that God has established certain instruments, certain agents, to communicate His truths, and that these, not He, fail to accomplish their task as perfectly as possible.

Worse still, belief in a doctrine of the kind opens the door to the most pernicious fanaticism, and consequently to extravagance, excess, and crime. A man who believes himself to be infallibly enlightened by God easily comes to confound the dreams of his own fancy with the light which he imagines to come from on high. In a word, the doctrine of private inspiration is calculated to lead, and actually has led, many souls into manifest error and impiety. Thus, but five years after the rise of Luther, the Anabaptists, carrying his doctrine of evangelical liberty to its logical conclusion, professed that they had been commanded by God to despoil and kill the wicked and to establish the kingdom of the just—meaning by the just those who consented to be rebaptized. The acknowledged head of the Anabaptists swept all before him, became master of Lower Germany, gave way to the most extravagant excesses at the supposed dictation of the Holy Spirit; he did not hesitate to marry eleven wives at the same time, nor to put them and numbers of his subjects to death. Another of their leaders declared the Old and New Testaments to be

imperfect, but added that "his own was perfect and that he was the true Son of God." The horrors of the Great Rebellion under Cromwell are only too well known; and these were the outcome of the belief held by him and his followers that they were inspired by God to destroy His enemies from off the face of the earth and to enter themselves into their inheritance.

The fundamental principle adopted by the Quakers was that every man is to follow the spirit within him as he himself feels it. In obedience to this spirit, the more ardent Quakers did not hesitate to go about naked into towns and cities, denouncing vengeance against the unregenerate. One of their most famous men, James Naylor, imagined he was the Messiah, and in that character rode into Bristol, while his disciples spread their garments under his feet to the cry of *Hosannah in the highest*.

It would take too long to enter into an account of the disgusting doctrines of the Moravian Brethren, of the followers of Swedenborg, and of Joanna Southcote who was able to persuade thousands that she was pregnant of the Messiah. So far was she able to impose on her followers that they had silver vessels prepared for His use when He should be born. She even went so far as to proclaim that she was authorized to issue passports to heaven to the number of 140,000.

Less extravagant and more respectable was the principle underlying Methodism and Wesleyanism; yet Wesley's ablest disciple had to complain of the gross immorality and crime into which their fundamental belief had led many of his disciples, so much so as to have "given such shapes to the rule of the Gospel, that had not the Lord interposed it must have been overset." He also complains that some of them held that "even adultery and murder do not hurt the pleasant children, but rather work for their good," and that "God sees no sin in believers, whatever sin they commit!"

True, indeed, Catholics have often committed excesses and crimes; but between these and the crimes of those who rely on private inspiration there is this great difference, that when a Catholic commits a crime he does so in direct opposition to the teachings of his religion; whereas the crimes and excesses committed in connexion with these sects were the direct outcome of the fundamental principle of their belief—the outcome, that is, of the dictates of the imaginary spirit by which they were led. As far as this means is concerned, therefore, the conclusion may be summed up in a few words: The only witnesses to whom we can appeal know nothing of it; they even, as we shall see, distinctly testify that Christ chose a different means; each one's

conscience, too, is ready at hand to proclaim that it knows nothing of such inspiration in its own case ; while experience only too clearly proves the sad effects that have followed the acceptance of any such belief.

(2) Inspiration, then, is not the way selected by our Lord to bring men to a knowledge of the truths of salvation ; but have we not a book, the New Testament, in which the truths revealed by Him are contained ? and is not this consequently the means He wishes us to adopt if we desire to attain to a knowledge of His truths and of His teaching ? Such in brief is the principle on which the various Protestant bodies base their belief. We have the Bible, they say, and that is enough for us without any human guide or authority. The Bible is the word of God, and God's word is all that we want. It contains God's word and that word is infallible ; and hence we need no infallible Church to tell us what we are to believe ; we can read the sacred volume for ourselves, and interpret its meaning for ourselves, and form our belief for ourselves.

As will be noted, those who hold this to be the means instituted by Christ do not accept the Bible simply as it is, but as it is interpreted,—and interpreted not by another, not by any higher authority, but simply and solely by the reader ; in other words, he accepts the statements as they appear to him, and it is in this sense that the Bible is for him the word of God. To him the Bible, interpreted by the Fathers, may or may not be the word of God ; the Bible, as interpreted by the Church, may or may not be the word of God ; the Bible, interpreted by another than himself, may or may not be the word of God ; but the Bible interpreted by himself—that, indeed, is the word of God, his only teacher, his only guide, his only infallible authority. In the long run, as will be observed, his infallible guide is not so much the Bible as his own interpretation of the Bible, or the meaning he attaches to the Bible.

Jesus Christ is the Church's Founder, Teacher, Lawgiver. He and He alone could determine and establish the way or the instrument by which He intended to perpetuate His teaching and mission on earth. What plan, then, did He follow ? Did He write down His whole saving doctrine in a book ? Did He set forth in a manual the method by which His work was to be continued ? The answer is, emphatically, No : Jesus Christ wrote no book, no memoir, no manual, not even as much as a single line. He set forth His teaching by word of mouth, and by word of mouth alone.

But, perhaps, He directed His followers to do so ? Again, the

answer is, No,—in all the New Testament there is not the remotest indication that He desired or decreed or directed any such manual or book to be prepared. If it was His will that a course of the kind was to be adopted we should at the very least expect that He, who was wisdom and truth itself, should have taken some pains to make His mind clear on a point of such overwhelming importance. Now, did He command His followers to collect His teaching into a book or manual so as to preserve it against change or corruption throughout the course of the ages? No; He neither wrote Himself nor commanded His disciples to write in His name; on the contrary, we find, on appealing to the witnesses of whom we spoke in our last instruction, that He gave them the express formal command to teach always and everywhere by word of mouth the truths they had learned from His lips: *Preach to every creature; go ye and teach all nations—teach them to observe all that I have taught you.*

Did He even exhort or advise His Apostles to reduce His teaching to writing? In the whole New Testament there is not the slightest evidence of any such exhortation or advice. True, indeed, some of the disciples did leave behind them certain writings concerning the life and teachings of our Lord, which writings have always been held in the highest esteem as having been written under the inspiration of God and as containing the word of God as far as they go; but from this fact it by no means follows that these writings were ever intended to constitute the one only way of preserving and propagating the teaching of our Lord, as will be clear from a few plain considerations:—

It is true after our Lord's Ascension the Apostles and disciples composed certain writings and letters. But when? Some of these writings were composed about ten years after our Saviour's death, others about twenty years, others about thirty years, others forty or fifty years after; while the last portion of the New Testament to be written, that is, the Gospel of St. John, was not composed till about seventy years after our Lord's death. Now in all these years—during more than half a century from the date of the Resurrection, that is to say, till about the end of the first century,—it is as clear as noonday that all our Lord's teaching was not to be sought in the New Testament, for the simple reason that the New Testament did not then exist.

On the contrary, the one way of acquiring a knowledge of our Lord's life and teaching was by listening to those whom He had authorized to act in His name: *Go and teach all nations*, and to whom He had at the same time given the guarantee of His unfailing, abiding assistance

by promising that He would be with them all days, even to the end of the world. During the first century, then, our Lord's teaching was not conveyed mainly through a book or books, but by the living voice of those whom He had set to rule the Church. In one word, if the Bible was not complete during the first century it could not be the one and only channel by which our Lord's teaching was to be preserved incorrupt and preached to all the people.

Such, then, was the case during the first century. That any change was subsequently introduced there is not a shadow of evidence for believing. If we are to believe that such a change did take place, some evidence of the fact ought to be forthcoming. We are asked to believe that there was a time, a day, a moment, when the faithful were to cease to depend on the living, teaching voice of the representatives of Christ, and to read, consult and follow the Bible alone; yet of this time, or day, or moment there is not the slightest evidence. No witness comes forward to speak of it. Sacred Scripture itself is mute on the subject; and on Protestant principles it is Sacred Scripture alone that has the right to command assent. The fact, then, that Sacred Scripture makes no mention of any such change is a clear indication that no change was made, that the existing system remained unchanged, that is to say, that our Lord's solemn command to *spe**a**k*, *preach*, *teach*, continued to indicate the means by which His doctrine was handed down.

But as belief in the Bible alone as the one authoritative source and court of appeal in matters affecting Christian doctrine is widespread, and is accepted by millions of souls, it will be advisable to discuss the subject at greater length. This we shall do in our next instructions.

Thirtieth Instruction on the Creed

THE IMPRACTICABILITY OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT

IN our last instruction it was pointed out that there are only three possible ways by which the whole body of truths taught by our Lord Jesus Christ can be conveyed to the soul of each individual. These truths must be directly communicated to each soul by inspiration ; or they must have been committed to writing and be found in a book or manual easily accessible to all ; or they must have been entrusted to a permanent body of men established for that purpose and sufficiently equipped for the work they had to do.

Regarding the first two alternatives, we saw that the only reliable witnesses that can be called on in this connexion—the writers of the New Testament—are absolutely silent ; they evidently knew nothing of any such inspiration, or any such book, as the one and only source of knowledge in matters of Christian faith and practice. And it cannot be repeated too often that it is on these witnesses, and not on our own prejudices or wishes or opinions or preconceived ideas, that we must rely. Doubtless, inspiration would be very easy to God and most easy for us ; doubtless, too, many souls would prefer to have at hand an inspired volume to which they could turn in all their spiritual needs. But that is not the point—the real point is, what did our Lord Himself decide ? And, as we have seen, there is not the slightest evidence to show that He ever dreamt on either of these means as the one channel by which His truths were to be conveyed to the souls of men.

In other words, all Christians agree that Christ our Lord came on earth to accomplish a certain mission ; that in discharging that mission He revealed certain truths which must be accepted and acted upon by all those who sincerely desire to be saved ; and that all that He revealed is true beyond the remotest shadow of doubt. So far, all are in perfect agreement. But then comes the question of questions : What are the truths which our Lord revealed when on earth ? No question can be of more vital importance ; and yet for the past four hundred years there is no question more bitterly debated. Many considerations have intervened to cloud the issue—passion, and prejudice, and self-interest, and carelessness, and indifference, and calumny ; but, after

all, the answer cannot but be simple. It is one of *fact*; and being a question of fact, it must be decided on the evidence of *testimony*. If we desire to ascertain the body of doctrines, precepts and institutions which our Lord delivered to His Apostles, we must first of all determine where we are to look for them, where they are to be found, not merely in a general way, but reliably and definitely,—in a word, we must decide on the evidence before us.

Now, as we have seen, there is not the slightest evidence to show that Christ our Lord ever intended that the truths revealed by Him were to be committed to a book as the one exclusive source whence each human soul was to derive a sufficient knowledge of the saving doctrine of salvation. And, as every candid mind must admit, the fact that there is no evidence of our Lord having established any such means is tantamount to a proof that such was not His intention.

True, indeed, both He and the Apostles more than once appear to the Scriptures and recommend their use. But in all such passages it is easy to observe that either reference is made to the Old Testament or that the Scriptures are appealed to as an argument which the Jews were bound to admit as conclusive on some particular point under discussion, or, finally, that the inspired volume is praised as being most useful towards the formation of a good and God-fearing man. So far there can be no difficulty—everyone sees that the Jews were bound to admit the force of an appeal to a volume which they themselves accepted as the very word of God; everyone, too, must admit that the teaching contained in that volume is of the highest utility and value; but it is altogether another thing to say that the volume in question is a sufficient guide, that it is able to solve all doubts, that it contains each and every truth revealed by God, and that our Saviour meant it to be the one court of appeal, the one guide, the one teacher, the one source whence each soul was to derive the truths of salvation. On the contrary, as we have repeated over and over again, and as cannot be repeated too often, there is not the faintest shadow of evidence that our Lord had any such intention; there is not a shadow of evidence to show that our Lord ever directed or advised the Apostles to commit all His truths to writing; there is not a shadow of evidence that the Apostles ever changed the method taught them by our Lord, which was that of spreading the Gospel by preaching, teaching, instructing by word of mouth; and in the absence of such evidence we are bound in all sincerity to conclude that neither our Lord nor the Apostles intended that all the truths of Christianity should be sought by each individual in any book whatever.

Once this fact has been definitely grasped, it will be clear that the question hitherto under discussion is now fixed and decided,—that is to say, it is clear that the one and only way of ascertaining the truths of salvation is not that of seeking them in the Bible—in other words, that the cry, “the Bible and the Bible only” is a false cry, a cry without foundation, a cruel invention of men setting themselves up against the teaching of our Lord.

But as millions of souls, especially during the last four hundred years, have been led to pin their whole faith and their whole hope of salvation on the cry “the Bible and the Bible alone,” and as those who have adopted that cry leave no stone unturned to entice Catholics to the same way of thinking, it will be advisable and even necessary to dwell in this instruction on a few plain, practical considerations regarding the difficulty and the practical impossibility of any such system as that which makes the Bible to be the one source of knowledge of the truths of salvation, the one test of belief, the one court of appeal, the one means intended and established by Christ our Lord to preserve and hand down His teaching in all its integrity and purity, and hence the one guide to life eternal.

We saw in our last instruction that during the first century the New Testament absolutely could not have been the only means of preserving, spreading, and handing down the truths of salvation, for the simple reason that it was not all written till the end of that century. *Go teach all nations*, said our Lord to the Apostles,—such was the commission given by the Church’s Founder to the Church’s first rulers. And in obedience to that command the Apostles had preached the Gospel in many lands and had gathered thousands into the bosom of the Church before a single line of the New Testament was written, while many years had passed and many more thousands had been added to the fold before the New Testament was complete. And even when complete, the same commission held good,—there is not the slightest evidence that it was ever rescinded. Not alone this; but in the New Testament, and particularly in the Epistles of St. Paul, there is copious evidence, as we shall see in future instructions, to show four things: (a) That our Lord appointed a certain body of men to teach His doctrine to the rest of mankind; (b) that to this body of teachers was given the authority of ordaining others, first to assist and then to succeed to that body; (c) that the persons thus selected and appointed as assistants and successors, received in their turn the commission to select others to assist and succeed to themselves; and (d) that these persons were appointed not only to teach others but also

to rule and govern them. Now, when did this succession of teachers come to an end? When were they replaced by a book? The New Testament not only never states that it did come to an end, but does not even give the remotest hint that it was ever intended to come to an end, and be replaced by a book. And in the absence of such evidence, let us repeat, one is not warranted in adopting a particular system of belief merely because it happens to fall in with one's prejudices, or preferences, or early training.

But suppose the New Testament had actually left the question undecided as to what were the means selected or established or intended by our Lord, could it be regarded as likely that He ever meant a book to replace the living, authoritative voice of the teachers who were appointed by His Apostles to come after them and carry on the work they had been sent to do? We have already said that had our Lord so wished He could have had His doctrine committed to a book or manual. But consider all that this involves, and you will readily see that, though quite possible for Him, because He was omnipotent, it was utterly impracticable, practically impossible, in the case of the average man.

The New Testament, as has been already remarked, was not all written at the same time; it was not written by the same hand; and the various portions of which it is composed were not addressed to the same places or persons—those to whom the separate portions were directed were separated by land and sea; and it was only later on that those scattered narratives and letters were gathered together into the little volume which we now know as the New Testament. Now, the very fact that these portions were not written by the same hand, nor at the same time, nor to the same places and persons, accounts for two facts that stand out distinctly and undeniably in the history of Christianity during the first four centuries.

The first of these facts is, that for several generations the Christians of various places accepted as inspired, and as forming part of the New Testament, many writings which the Church later on rejected,—which rejection, it may be remarked, has since been acquiesced in by most of those who now reject that Church's authority. Thus there were more than twenty gospels in circulation amongst the faithful in various parts of the world; an epistle, called the Epistle of Barnabas, was long regarded as inspired; so was the First Epistle of St. Clement; so was the *Pastor*, a work written by St. Hermes, one of St. Paul's friends. All these were publicly read in many churches as the inspired word of God; and if they are not now included in the list of inspired books,

it is because the Church, having carefully examined the question, solemnly rejected them, though continuing to regard them as precious monuments of early Christian piety.

The second fact is, that many of the books which are now so unhesitatingly accepted as inspired were regarded with doubt, or were even utterly rejected by a considerable part of the faithful of the first four centuries. Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews, the two Epistles of St. Peter, the Epistle of St. James, the Epistle of St. Jude, the two last Epistles of St. John, and the Book of the Apocalypse, as well as chapters or passages here and there throughout the other New Testament writings, were long held in doubt, or rejected, or only partially accepted ; and if eventually they became definitely included in the list of inspired books, it was simply because of the authoritative decision of the Church in solemn council assembled.

During the first four centuries, too, it is an established fact that there were as many as fourteen or fifteen lists of the inspired books drawn up by various hands, and that hardly any two of these lists are identical—one list omitting one book, and another another. But it is curious to observe that not a single list is found to enumerate precisely the same books as are now accepted by those who pin their faith to the Bible and the Bible only.

Now, these two facts bring one truth into the clearest relief, and it is this, that under such circumstances it was utterly impossible for the early Christians to rely on the Bible, and the Bible only, for their knowledge of the Word of God. For it is as clear as noonday that they could not and did not rely on a collection of writings which, instead of being fixed and certain, remained doubtful and uncertain for more than three hundred years. To hold that they were called on to do anything of the kind would be just the same as to expect them to derive certain knowledge from doubtful sources, pure water from a tainted cistern. In other words, to claim that the Bible, and the Bible only, was intended by our Lord as the one source of knowledge of His saving truths would be the same as to make Him say : “ I hereby order a certain set of writings to be prepared ; the truths I came on earth to teach are all to be found in that set of writings and nowhere else ; those who wish to be saved must believe all these truths, and they who do not believe them shall be damned ; but where that set of writings is to be found, what are the parts that actually compose it, are questions that do not concern Me ; you must settle them for yourselves ; you will make mistakes ; you will remain in doubt and uncertainty ; you will accept some writings as Mine, which are not Mine at all, and,

on the other hand, you will reject as none of Mine some that really belong to Me ; yet, despite the doubt and uncertainty in which I leave you as regards the writings in which and in which alone the truths I came to teach are exclusively contained, you must believe all these truths, and if you do not believe them you will suffer the eternal loss of your souls." No need to point out that he who would consciously maintain any such doctrine as this would be guilty of a downright insult to the mercy and justice of the Saviour of men.

Nor will this be less evident if we consider the state of the times and the condition of the average man with regard to education and the use of books. In our own days and amongst our own people we are so accustomed to getting books easily and cheaply that we find it difficult to imagine a day, not so very long ago, when only the very few were in a position to buy a book, and of these few not all were able to read. Apart altogether from the fact that the great majority of the whole world, even of to-day, do not know how to read, there is the further consideration of the state of things prior to the invention of printing about four hundred years ago. Since that event occurred, a book can be multiplied in thousands at very little extra cost per copy ; but previous to that wonderful invention, previous to four centuries ago, how was a book multiplied ? By the slow and toilsome process of copying out word by word every line in that book. Add to this the fact that the discovery how to make cheap paper had not yet been heard of, and you will be in a position to estimate the difficulty that attended the diffusion of the Bible, nay, even the utter impossibility of the Bible being accessible to the generality of men up to a few centuries ago. To put the case in the fewest possible words : the Bible contains about 35,000 verses, which when written out in ordinary handwriting would cover about 420 skins of parchment. Now, this quantity of parchment would cost about £80, and the cost of copying would be about £130,—even a good copyist could not finish the work in less than six months. These few undeniable facts clearly show the insuperable difficulties that stood in the way of any book being popular in the ordinary sense of the word. The Bible, and the Bible only, could not have been the one exclusive guide, the one key to the truths of salvation, for the simple reason that not one in ten thousand could hope to possess a copy of it, while fewer still could read it. That every individual should possess a copy of the Bible was simply out of the question, even for the rich ; and as for the poor, what was to become of them ? though, as we know, it was dear to our Lord's heart that *to the poor the Gospel is announced*.

God fed the Israelites in the desert with manna that miraculously fell from heaven ; and just as He then fed the Israelites, so could He feed every son of Adam down to the present day and to the very end of the world. But, as we know, He does not follow this course—man must earn his bread by the labour of his hands and by the sweat of his brow. In the same way, God could have written a book containing His whole teaching in the clearest and most unmistakable way ; and along with this He could easily accomplish the miracle of enabling each individual to understand that book without having to go to the trouble of learning to read. But we well know that no such miracle has been or is wrought ; and until it does take place it is simply madness to talk of the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the Christian's one guide to heaven,—sufficient has been said to show that such a guide is a practical impossibility for the average man.

In our next instruction we shall set forth some further considerations connected with this subject, and especially the inconsistent and contradictory attitude assumed by those who adopt the principle of the Bible and the Bible only.

For the present it will be well to remember that the Catholic Church has ever preserved and venerated the Bible as her most precious inheritance, as her treasury of divine truths, as the inspired word of God, as the choicest food of devout souls, as the great text-book of Christian doctrine. On that book the Church's saints have laboured lovingly in profound meditation and incessant study, so much so that there is hardly one of them who has not left behind him a commentary or treatise on some portion or other of Sacred Scripture. And the ripe fruits of their learning and piety are deposited in the treasure-house of the Church, forming the store on which the Church draws for the instruction of her children from generation to generation. And thus does she zealously impart to us the wisdom contained in the sacred volume,—not only by placing the word of God in the hands of those capable of reading it, not only by the direct teaching of her pastors, whom she carefully prepares and equips for their task, but by her various festivals, ordinances, rituals, practices and popular devotions, all of which, when properly understood, will be found to be so many living commentaries on Sacred Scripture.

To take an example : every Catholic knows that one of the practices most highly prized and recommended is that of mental prayer or meditation. Now, if you open one of the countless meditation-books that are in use amongst the faithful, you will find on examining it that the subject-matter of almost every meditation is taken directly

from Sacred Scripture ; you will find that every recorded action, and word, and suffering of our Lord has been made the theme of devout, heartfelt contemplation ; while if you examine the lives of those souls on whom the Church has set the seal of canonization, you will find that, without a single exception, they had made such meditation their daily food, their dearest delight.

To those, then, who desire to know the word of God the Church holds out a simple and advantageous method, on which she has set the seal of her approval by centuries of precept and practice, and that method is meditation on the truths recorded in Sacred Scripture, and especially those truths connected with the life and teaching of her divine Founder, which her devout sons in every age have drawn up, developed and prepared for the use of all classes of souls—for the poor as well as the rich, for the ignorant as well as the learned, for the young as well as the old, for the sinner as well as the saint.

Thirty-first Instruction on the Creed

THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ONLY

IN previous instructions we saw that there was not the slightest evidence to show that our Lord intended that His doctrine was to be committed to a manual or book or set of writings, which was to serve as the only guide that could lead the soul along the way to salvation. We also examined the difficulties that lie in the way of any such system; we dwelt particularly on the fact that the Church existed before the Bible; that for several centuries the faithful at large were uncertain as to the writings that really make up the list of the inspired volume; and that, even apart from this, previous to the invention of printing and the discovery of the way of making cheap paper, not one in ten thousand could hope to possess a copy of the Bible, while fewer still were able to read it.

To-day we shall turn our attention to those who have actually adopted the Bible, and the Bible only, as their guiding principle, and we shall examine how they fare, and how that principle works out in practice.

The first point to which attention should be directed is this, that while Catholics have a fixed, definite and common form of belief, which is the same all over the world, the case is quite different with Protestants. Of course one Catholic may be better instructed than another, and may consequently have a more detailed and more express knowledge of the articles of his faith; but you will not find one Catholic holding one article of faith and another Catholic denying it. Once a particular truth has been declared to be an article of faith the Catholic accepts it either directly and definitely, or implicitly and on the authority of the Church. But when we come to examine Protestant practice, everything is different,—it is almost impossible to determine what a Protestant really holds with regard to religion. Indeed, it has been very truly observed it is much easier to say what Protestantism is not, than what it is. The one thing that is certain about it is, that it is not the Catholic doctrine. It is much easier to pull down than to build up; and the Protestant reformers pulled down, destroyed, denied, rejected, set aside with a will the various truths

which Catholics had hitherto held ; but, ready as they were to take away, they were at very little pains to put anything definite in the place of that which they had set aside. Protestants all over the world are at perfect agreement in turning their backs on the Church, and in rejecting the Catholic faith ; but when they come to speak for themselves, they are very much at a loss, they know not what to say, they waver and speak at random, so that one says one thing, and another another—nay, the very same individual is often found to hold one thing to-day and the very contrary to-morrow.

Thus a certain section of Protestants accepts an episcopal body as divinely constituted by our Lord ; other sections deny this. A certain section believes that the clergyman who ministers to the spiritual needs of a flock must be validly ordained ; the other sections laugh at such an idea. A certain section believes in the efficacy and necessity of baptism ; other sections look on it as a mere ceremony of no particular value. A certain section holds that infants should be baptized ; the other sections deny this, or claim that such infants must be re-baptized as soon as they come to the use of reason. One section holds that human nature is totally corrupt ; another holds that it is not corrupt at all. One section believes in two sacraments ; another rejects sacraments altogether.

Now, what is the cause of this most serious diversity of belief. Whence does it arise ? To what is it due ? To this : Protestants, like all other Christians, are agreed that the Son of God came on earth to teach mankind the will of His Father, that those who wish to be saved must do their best to know and do that will, and that our Lord Jesus Christ could not but leave us some means to enable us all to know for certain and without fear of mistake the truths which He taught and which we must believe and act on to attain to life everlasting. What is that means ? The Protestant at once answers that our Lord took care to have all written down very clearly and distinctly in a book called the Bible ; and that anyone who wishes to know what he is to believe and do to be saved has only to go to that book, and he will find all he needs. Plainly no system could be simpler, as far as the mere statement goes. But let us put it to the test and see how it works out in practice.

Now, how does the principle of the Bible, and the Bible only, that is, the Bible interpreted by private judgment, work out in practice ?

I. First of all, it leads to endless confusion, disagreement, contradiction. Sacred Scripture, like any other book, can have but one true meaning, that is to say, the meaning intended by its author.

there is but one revelation, and there can be but one true interpretation of that revelation; and hence it is as clear as noonday that two contradictory interpretations of one and the same revelation cannot both be true.

Moreover, it is equally certain that it is impossible to hold that the meaning of Sacred Scripture is so clear and near the surface that the average man can be sure that he is making no mistake in the meaning he attaches even to passages of the utmost importance; that is to say, he has no certainty that he understands it aright, or, in other words, that he gives it the meaning intended by its author, which obviously can be its only true meaning. A glance at the structure of Sacred Scripture suffices to prove beyond all manner of doubt that the average man could never hope, unaided, to get at its true meaning, beyond all fear of error. For in the sacred volume doctrines are not set forth in scientific or systematic form,—they are scattered up and down, here and there, without any apparent attempt at system at all.

Not only this, but the separate truths of Christianity are by no means so clearly expressed in Sacred Scripture that the language in which they are conveyed must of necessity be taken in its obvious meaning and in no other. To take a few examples. Of all the texts, in Sacred Scripture there is none in which the sense appears so easily obvious, and imperatively necessary, as those which refer to the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist: *This is My body; this is My blood.* Couple these words with His promise in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, in which He solemnly declared that He was to give His flesh to eat, and His language seems so clear as to defy diversity of interpretation. Yet what are the facts? Protestants are the first to hold that the language is not to be taken literally, that is to say, that the words do not convey what they seem to convey, that it does not mean what it seems to mean, that the meaning is not unquestionable. It is the same with the passages referring to the power of forgiving sins; it is the same with those referring to the other sacraments; it is the same with those referring to the Church—in one word, there is hardly a single text on any doctrinal matter which explains itself so thoroughly as to leave room for no question; and how can the individual be certain that he gives the true answer, understands the real meaning intended by the writer? How can he solve for himself the many absolutely essential questions involved in even the most elementary truths of Christianity? Thus, if we try to arrive at a rational understanding of what is meant by

"*The Word became flesh*," three wide questions at once present themselves for solution: What is meant by *Word*; what by *flesh*; and what by *became*? History tells how individuals in different ages tried to solve these questions for themselves; how they started more than one false opinion; and how they carried thousands and thousands away with them. These opinions are no longer held; but the fact that they were once held by thousands of individuals proves that there was some apparent reason and that such meaning was at least possible. And if that meaning was possible, and if each individual is free to accept whatever opinion his own private judgment may dictate, it is clear that the whole system of Christianity must result in confusion, chaos, and endless contradictions, as actually is the case amongst the hundreds of sects and factions into which Protestantism is split up. For, that Protestantism is split up into almost countless sects, and that each sect is based on its own particular interpretation of the Bible, is a fact too notorious to require proof. "The Bible is an instrument on which every man may play his own tune," and what a discord is the result! The Anglican reads one system of religion in the Bible; the Presbyterian another; the Quaker another; the Methodist another; the Lutheran another; the Wesleyan another; and the Unitarian another—all deriving their religion from the Bible, and all, of course, claiming to be assisted by the Holy Spirit!

II. In the next place, Protestants do not really follow the principle of the Bible and the Bible alone, interpreted by each one's own particular judgment. It would be an interesting question to discuss, whether there exists a single Protestant who really gathers his own particular form of belief from the Bible alone, without some outside influence of one kind or another? In point of fact, hardly a single one comes to the study of the Bible with mind unbiassed or uninfluenced by early training, by traditional belief, and by the forces of prejudice, education, and home influence. The mind of each individual is moulded on that of his particular sect, just as the mind of the sect is moulded on the leading ideas of its founder; Scripture poured into that mould naturally assumes its form; and thus men imagine that Scripture really contains what they themselves have poured into it. Nay, while Protestants are loud in rejecting the Church's authority, and in asserting the principle of private judgment, the individual really, if unconsciously, moulds his religious system not on his own private judgment, but on the interpretation of that very Church whose authority he is so ready to despise and reject. Take the leading doctrines of Christianity,—that of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of Original

Sin, and of Atonement for sin. With regard to these great truths, every candid man must admit that without previous training and previous instruction, he could never have succeeded in gathering his present belief in them from the Bible alone, in anything like the definite and detailed manner in which they are actually held. The real fact is that they have been handed down to him from old Catholic days, and he who says he derives them from the Bible alone, simply does not know his own mind, simply does not know what he is saying.

III. Finally, not alone do Protestants not stand by the Bible alone, but in several points they hold and do things that are not to be found in the Bible at all, or are even contrary to the Bible. Not to mention their belief in the inspiration of the Bible, not to mention their practice of baptizing infants and of observing Sunday instead of Saturday—points which the Bible does not clearly determine,—Protestants of deliberate purpose do not receive everything that is contained in the Bible. In other words, the Bible, which they accept as inspired, makes many statements which they do not really receive at all ; it has many passages which they try to explain away, because opposed to their own pet theory of private judgment ; while not a few of its texts are flatly contradicted by them—in one word, though they profess to make use of the whole Bible, they set aside certain parts of it ; though they profess to believe it all, they act as though they only believed a part of it, and even deny much that the Bible tells them in the very plainest language. Let us mention a few of these contrasts :—

The Bible says : *Jesus coming, spoke to them (the Apostles), saying : All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth ; going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*¹ The Protestant says : No, it was not His intention to assist them to the end of the world ; He even intended to withdraw His special guidance and assistance at some future date, when the Bible should have been written, after which date His promised presence was no longer to remain with the *preachers* of the Gospel as hitherto, but with the book in which that Gospel was to be written.

The Bible says : *He said to them again : Peace be to you ; as the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*² On the contrary, the Protestant

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² John xx. 21.

says: There is no one now on earth sent in the same way as Jesus Christ had been sent by the Father.

The Bible says: *As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world . . . and not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me.*¹ The Protestant says: There is no body of men through whose word souls are now called on by God to believe in Jesus Christ.

The Bible says: *He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.*² The Protestant says: There is nobody who now represents our Lord on earth to such an extent that those who despise his teaching despise the teaching of our Lord Himself by that very fact.

The Bible says: *And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.*³ The Protestant says: There is no Church or body of men whose words we are bound to hear and obey in matters of religion.

The Bible says: *The things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also.*⁴ The Protestant says: No, this method was unsafe, and after the lapse of a few years was to be discontinued, since no man could be deemed trustworthy and faithful enough, or fit to teach others, as Paul has directed Timothy to do.

The Bible says: *Brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle.*⁵ The Protestant says: No, there was to be no such thing as unwritten traditions,—the whole teaching of Christ was to be found in writing.

Yet, with regard to all these points, the Bible has not the slightest mention of any change being made or even intended; whereas the Protestant, who claims he stands by the Bible and the Bible alone, simply says this change did take place at some indefinite time, but he does not and cannot bring forward a single passage from the Bible in support of his views—thus showing that while professing to stand by the Bible alone, he really has recourse to something not in the Bible to support the most fundamental article of his faith.

To express the state of the case somewhat differently: A Protestant professes that the only sure way of knowing God's will is for every individual to read Sacred Scripture for himself. But take up a copy of Sacred Scripture, read it from cover to cover, and what do you find? You find that our Lord appointed and the Apostles practised

¹ John xvii. 18, 20.

⁴ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

² Luke x. 16.

⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 14.

³ Matt. xviii. 17.

quite another way of learning God's will—you find that He sent, not a message, but a messenger; not a book for men to read, but Apostles for men to hear and obey. In the same way you find that the Apostles know nothing of the necessity of believing those things only that are written in a certain book; but, on the contrary, that some of them distinctly write that their correspondents are to believe all they have been taught, whether written or unwritten. Oh, replies the Protestant, you must not believe all that the Bible says, for some portions of it concerned a mere passing state of things, were not intended for you, and do not refer to the present generation. All of which comes to this, that the Protestant case may be summed up in the following statement, which is simply self-destruction: Believe the Bible and the Bible only; and at the same time with regard to certain parts of it do not believe what the Bible says, but what I say.

To conclude: The Protestant, though professing to follow no guide but the written word of God, is unable to point out any words of Christ or the Apostles commanding us to employ the written word of God alone, or telling us that the written word is sufficient for all the needs of man, or stating that all truths necessary to salvation are to be found therein; and hence, even on Protestant principles, the Protestant is condemned out of his own mouth.

The conclusion, then, is obvious. As the Bible is far from being a plain and easy book, which every man is capable of reading and understanding for himself; as it is in very many parts a difficult book, a book which, to use the strong expression of St. Peter, *the unlearned and the unstable may easily wrest to their own destruction*; ¹ it follows that we require some sure and trustworthy guide empowered to declare its true meaning and enable us to use it aright—not to our destruction but to our salvation. What that guide is we shall proceed to examine in our next instruction.

¹ 2 Peter iii. 16.

Thirty-second Instruction on the Creed

OUR LORD'S PLAN

IN the preceding instructions we have seen that the means established by our Lord to communicate to all men and to all generations the teaching He had given by word of mouth during the three years of His public life, consisted neither in individual inspiration nor in a written manual or code; and hence nothing remains but the third way, which, as we saw, is the only remaining possibility, and which consisted in setting up and leaving behind Him, as His authorized representative, a special body of men entrusted with the continuation of the work He had come on earth to do. Accordingly we shall now proceed to show that this was really what He did, and, having seen this, we shall then enquire into the nature, powers and prerogatives of that special body established by Him.

I. Did our Lord, then, set up and leave behind Him a special body of men, duly equipped to carry on His teaching and perpetuate His work? To find the answer, let us turn to the competent witnesses, and let us hear the evidence they have to give :—

They tell us that our Lord began His public life by calling to Him certain disciples,—men neither rich, nor great, nor powerful, nor learned, nor celebrated; but ordinary fishermen, with no fortune but their nets. St. Mark tells the simple story of that call. As He walked beside the sea of Galilee one day, our Lord, seeing some fishermen engaged in casting their nets, turned to them and said : *Come after Me and I will make you to become fishers of men.*¹ And in obedience to that wondrous call these poor fishermen, Simon and Andrew, James and John, left their nets and followed Him without hesitation, casting no glance behind at the little they were leaving, even though that little was their all.

And other disciples gathering round Him, He soon found Himself followed by a great throng. One day He withdrew to a mountain, where *He spent the whole night in prayer;*² and just as the morning sun was beginning to shine, He called His followers around Him and

¹ Mark i. 17.

² Luke vi. 12.

made choice of twelve of them : *He chose twelve to whom He gave the name of Apostles.*¹ The Twelve—some of whom, as we have seen, had been already called—were: Peter and Andrew ; James and John ; Thomas and Philip ; Bartholomew and Matthew ; James and Thaddeus ; Simon the Zealot ; and, lastly, Judas Iscariot. These were to be His intimate friends, His chosen followers, His trusty representatives ; *He made*, says St. Mark, *that twelve should be with Him, and that He might send them to preach.*² Henceforth they constitute the College of His Apostles ; they form a chosen band round about Him ; they attend Him wherever He goes, sharing in His joys and sorrows, His hopes and fears, His successes and failures, following His directions, and drinking in day by day the words of wisdom and instruction that fell from His lips.

From that day forth, the Gospels constantly speak of the *Twelve* as being our Saviour's escort and the executors of His commands. Thus : *Calling together the twelve Apostles, He gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases ; and He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.*³ If mention has to be made of one of the Apostles, the Gospels refer to him as *one of the Twelve* ; and when one of them, the traitor Judas, had miserably fallen away, Peter's first act was to have another appointed in his place to fill up the number of twelve. That the Twelve formed a specially chosen group from the beginning, there can be not the smallest doubt ; and at a later day He Himself took care to remind them explicitly of this fact, when He said to them at the Last Supper : *You have not chosen Me ; but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*⁴

Having called them, He next proceeded to instil into their minds the truths, virtues and habits which would one day be necessary for the exercise of their apostolate. Observe how He proceeds : In His relations with them there is to be found no outward pomp, no rule, no ceremonial, no formality. He lives with them as a father in the midst of his children ; and like a father He gradually unfolds to their minds an outline of the future that is before them, of the inheritance that is to be theirs, of the work they one day shall have to do. He converses with them along the borders of their native lake, in their boat, in solitude, by the roadside, within doors, in the public squares, in the synagogues. Usually He addresses them in parables, based on the commonest objects around them, such as

¹ Luke vi. 13.² Mark iii. 14.³ Luke ix. 1, 2.⁴ John xv. 16.

a vine, a field, a seed, the harvest, the reaper, the shepherd, the fisher, the banquet, the marriage-feast. Precept is accompanied by practice ; things easy are followed by things more difficult, which He repeats and explains under various forms. He never hurries them, but waits till the seed sown has taken root in their mind and heart ; He even assures them that one day there shall come on them a light from on high to illumine their minds and enable them to grasp all that is implied in His teaching. And thus He proceeds, imprinting His whole teaching indelibly on their minds, so that if He on His part could say : *All things that I have learned from the Father, I have made known unto you*, they in their turn were able one day to cry out, *Now Thou speakest clearly*.

And when the storm has come and gone, when He issues forth glorious and immortal from the tomb, He continues His instructions, recalls the days that are gone, repeats the truths already revealed, imprints them more deeply on their minds, and completes the work that had been interrupted by suffering and death ; and finally before leaving them He solemnly assigns them their mission : *You shall be witnesses at Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost ends of the earth.—Go, then, and teach all nations.—Teach them to keep all things that I have commanded you, and lo ! I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*.

Not only does He aim at committing His doctrine to this chosen group of men ; He also wills to endow them with very special prerogatives, nay, with all His own power and authority, in the discharge of the task He lays on their shoulders. They are to be His apostles, His envoys, His ambassadors, His representatives, the light of the world, the salt of the earth ; they are to be endowed with the very same power which He has from the Father : *As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you* ; ¹ they are to be received just as He Himself would be received : *He that heareth you heareth Me, and He that despiseth you despiseth Me* ; He will ratify in heaven whatever they decide on earth. In a word, so close is the union He establishes between Himself and them that He is in them and they in Him,—both He and they constitute but one thing, so that there is no access to Him but through them, just as there is no access to the Father but through Him. Such is the testimony furnished by the competent witnesses as to the steps taken by our Lord to have His teaching preserved and handed down to the then unborn generations.

¹ John xx. 21.

Our witnesses, then, tell us that our Lord established a certain body of men to teach His Gospel to the rest of mankind. They also testify unmistakably that to this particular body was committed the authority of ordaining others to assist and succeed to themselves—clear instances of the existence and exercise of such authority are found in the election of Matthias to supply the place of Judas, and in the ordination of Saul and Barnabas. They also testify that the persons thus appointed received a commission themselves in their turn to appoint others to come after them. It is thus that St. Paul instructs Timothy, whom he had previously appointed to the work of preaching the Gospel: *The things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also.*¹ They also testify that the persons thus appointed were empowered not only to teach but to govern: *Teach all nations—Command them to observe—Reprove, entreat, rebuke—Rebuke sharply—To rule the Church of God.*

II. Not only this, but as our Lord had selected out of all His disciples and followers a chosen body of men to continue and carry on His mission, so out of that chosen body of twelve He selected one whom He treated in a very special way and to whom He assigned special prerogatives, special rights, and special duties in the Apostolic College.

Turn over the pages of the Gospel, examine the competent witnesses as to the manner in which our Lord treated the various Apostles, and you will find that beyond all doubt Peter is given a special place amongst them and that he is in fact named and represented as their head.

Thus, as God changed Abraham's name in view of the high office to which He destined him, so the first time that our Lord met Peter He changed his former name of Simon into one which, as afterwards transpired, foreshadowed and denoted the position He was to occupy in the Church.

Again, the Gospels always give him the first place amongst the Apostles, while he on his part always acts as head, speaking for all, answering for all, representing all.

Again, there is the celebrated promise made by our Lord to him. Alone amongst the Apostles Peter, in the most solemn way, had confessed the divinity of Jesus Christ: *Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God*; and our Lord, having listened to this solemn pro-

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

fession from the lips of His Apostle, responded : *Blessed art thou Simon, Son of Jonah, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven ; and I say to thee : Thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And all that thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven ; and all that thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.* In other words : "Thou art blessed ; for it is neither flesh nor blood that has revealed this to thee ; it is My heavenly Father who has done so. And since thou knowest so well who I am, I on My part will tell thee who thou art : Thou art the Rock, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. All that thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and all that thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."

Let us look closely into this celebrated passage. Obviously Christ addresses St. Peter alone ; it is equally obvious that His words convey a direct promise regarding an edifice which He is to build, and the foundation on which He is to build it ; and His promise is that Peter is to be the foundation, the immovable rock by which the whole edifice of His Church was to be supported and held together, and maintained firm and unshaken to the end of time.

Furthermore, our Lord goes on to indicate the position assigned by Him to St. Peter, by speaking of him not only as the rock on which His Church was to be built, but as the steward who was to hold the keys of His Kingdom. There can be no misunderstanding the force of these words. When a man leaves his house and gives the keys thereof into the hands of another, the obvious, the only, meaning of the act is, that during his absence that other is to have the charge and governorship of the house. Indeed, so significant is the handing over of the keys of a house or place, that when a sovereign makes solemn entry into the principal city of his state, the keys of that city are presented to him as a recognized acknowledgment of his sovereign authority. Hence, just as when we read that our Lord has *the keys of death and hell*, we are to understand that He has supreme authority over them ; so when we know that He promises to entrust to Peter the keys of His Church, we are bound to conclude that He means to convey to Peter a special superiority therein. Though our Lord later on promises to the Apostles generally what He has promised to Peter in particular, that is, the power of binding and loosing, yet there is a fundamental difference between the significance of the

two promises. For the promise of the keys is given to Peter alone, and this precisely is the promise that gives him his peculiar superiority and authority. Together with the power of binding and loosing, Peter alone holds the keys—the others do not. This can only mean that while to the Apostles is promised the use of a certain power—the power of opening and closing—Peter holds the keys as habitual owner. And hence the difference between the power conferred on Peter and that given to the Apostles generally, is precisely the difference between the ownership of a thing and the simple use of it. Peter is the keeper of the keys—the Apostles have the power of using them.

To Peter, then, is promised absolute power over the Lord's house, His Church. As a consequence of this power he has authority to bind and to loose, to open and to shut, to make laws and to modify them. So absolute is the authority promised to him that in the exercise of this power he is unfailingly to have the ratification of heaven.

The work, however, was but begun; it had still to be completed; and this is done after the Resurrection, when, for the fifth time, our Lord appears to His Apostles. As before, He singles out Peter from the rest, and thrice puts to him the question: *Dost thou love Me?* And thrice does Peter answer: *Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee*; and as Peter answered, our Lord said to Him: *Feed My lambs; be shepherd over My sheep*. To have charge of feeding the Lord's sheep can only mean to have charge of feeding the Lord's flock; and to have charge of feeding the flock can only mean to be its shepherd; and to be shepherd of a flock can only mean to have full authority over it. Peter, then, who has already been made foundation of the Church, key-bearer of Christ's Kingdom on earth, master of the Lord's house, is now constituted supreme pastor of Christ's flock. To put all this in the very shortest form: If in the Gospel there is one thing clearer and more manifest than another, it is that our Lord constituted Peter head of the Apostolic College.

The very best test of the possession of superior authority over others consists in the fact that it is regularly exercised over them without any objection on their part. Let us apply this test to St. Peter and his attitude in the years that followed the Ascension.

Sacred Scripture invariably places Peter at the head of the Apostles. The other Apostles are mentioned without any particular attention as to order; but Peter is not only invariably placed first, but is actually mentioned by St. Matthew as *the first*. Now, why *the first*? Can there be any other reason than this, that Peter is th

first because it was on him that Christ founded His Church ; that it was to him that Christ committed the keys of His Kingdom ; that it was to him that Christ gave the commission to feed and rule His fold ?

The Apostles, then, recognized a difference between the position of Peter and their own position. Not only this, but Peter's conduct shows that he was conscious of the difference and acted accordingly, taking the lead and assuming the direction on occasions of general interest and great importance, after the Ascension. Thus, it was he who took the lead in the election of an Apostle to succeed Judas. It was Peter who first spoke in public after the descent of the Holy Ghost, thus delivering the first message of salvation to the people. It was Peter who first inflicted punishment. It was he who first condemned heresy. It was he who first proclaimed that the Gentiles were to be admitted into the Church. When dissension arose, it was Peter who led the way and whose sentence was followed by all the rest.

Our Lord, then, came down from heaven to teach mankind to do the will of His Father. Those who wish to be saved must know and do that will. To enable men to know this, all our witnesses are at one in pointing to the fact that He adopted a very simple means. He chose out a small body of men ; He carefully instructed them in all that concerned the Kingdom of God ; He gave them a commission to teach all mankind ; and as a guarantee of success He promised to be with them all days to the end of the world.

Nor was this all. Out of that small body of men He chose one whom He treated in a special manner. To this one He gives a new name—that of the Rock. On this rock He promises to build His Church ; to him also He commits the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, with unlimited powers to bind and loose ; on him He lays the charge of feeding His flock. And with these facts before us, if we do not want to belie God's word, we must admit that Peter occupied a special position amongst the Apostles, that he was the superior, the head, the chief of the Apostolic College.

Thirty-third Instruction on the Creed

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

THAT Jesus Christ founded a certain institution to carry on His mission will be abundantly clear from what has been said in our last instruction. In that instruction we saw that over the rank and file of those who were to be taught, baptized, and led along the path of salvation He appointed a chosen body of men, called the Apostles ; that at the head of the Apostles He placed St. Peter, to whom He gave special powers and prerogatives ; that to this institution thus founded He gave the name of His Church ; and that to this institution or Church He entrusted His doctrine, together with the power of teaching, ruling, governing, deciding—in one word, that He made it the representative and continuation of His mission on earth.

Having, then, seen that our Lord established and left behind Him a certain corporate body or institution called His Church, to carry on His work, we now proceed to examine the nature and qualities of that institution.

When eight days after the Ascension the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles, the number of Christians probably did not exceed one hundred and twenty souls, eleven of whom formed the Apostolic College—that body which He had specially chosen and commissioned to preach, teach, instruct, and carry the good news to the uttermost ends of the earth. Yet small as was that little society, it contained all the qualities and characteristics that Christ had willed His Church to have.

First of all, He willed that in His Church there should be members, and that membership should be acquired by belief, followed by the reception of a certain exterior rite called Baptism : *Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature* (such was the commission given by our Lord to the Apostles) : *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be condemned* ;¹ or as St. Matthew has it : *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* The

¹Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Apostles lost no time in aggregating members to the infant Church. On the morning of Pentecost, immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, St. Peter converted and received about three thousand into the Church. For a time they confined their preaching to the Jews ; but ere long they resolved to receive the Greeks and Gentiles also, many of whom gladly embraced the truth, God prospering the work, the result of which is thus summarized by St. Luke : *The Lord added to their number day by day such as should be saved.*¹ In the first place, then, the Church founded by Christ contained members, and membership was acquired by belief and baptism received through the Apostles.

And in the second place, He willed that these members should be taught, guided, governed, and provided for by a special body of men whom He called His Apostles, whom He made His representatives, and whom He commissioned to carry on His mission on earth down to the very end of time. That the College of the Apostles was also to have authority over the rank and file of the faithful, will be abundantly clear from what has been shown in our last instruction. Not only were the Apostles to be teachers—they were also to be judges : *Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven ; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.*² *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven ; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained.*³ *If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.*⁴ And not only were they to be judges—they were also to be rulers, as St. Paul reminded the clergy of Ephesus : *The Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God.*⁵ And not only were they to have authority to rule, but every act of rebellion against them would be regarded by Him as equivalent to an act of rebellion against Himself : *He that heareth you, heareth Me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me.*⁶

So far, then, it is clear beyond a shadow of doubt that from the very beginning the Church possessed not only members, but a duly constituted governing body to rule these members, laws to regulate their conduct as members, and penalties to be inflicted for the violation of these laws.

Now, what is the end and aim of Church membership, governing body, laws, and penalties ? To continue the mission of Jesus Christ on earth and thereby to enable mankind to attain eternal life, eternal salvation.

¹ Acts ii. 47.⁴ Matt. xviii. 17.² Matt. xviii. 18.⁵ Acts xx. 28.³ John xx. 23.⁶ Luke x. 16.

And how is that end and aim secured? By the discharge of that commission which Jesus Christ entrusted to the Church's governing body—by preaching, teaching, baptizing, binding and loosing, together with the various other means of sanctification with which He has been pleased to provide His Church.

In this institution or Church, therefore, which Jesus Christ founded and established to carry on His work on earth, we learn from the competent witnesses that there are to be found a number of human beings, bound together for the attainment of a definite object by the use of definite means, under the direction of a duly constituted board of governors whom they must obey as long as they wish to share in the benefits conferred by that institution.

Now all this means neither more nor less than that our Lord founded His Church on the lines of a social organization, a regularly constituted society. And as it is of the most far-reaching importance to have the clearest possible grasp of this particular fact, we must, before proceeding further, pause to form a clear notion of what is meant by a society.

Wherever you find a number of human beings consciously co-operating towards some particular result you have a society. Not every assembly of men, however, constitutes a society. For instance, a crowd gathered together by chance cannot be called a society. To have a society, you must have several individuals bound together by a common bond, and working together towards the attainment of some common end. It is not enough that the members of a society should desire the attainment of some particular end—before they can really be called a society they must exert themselves and use the proper means to attain the end they have in view. Hence, to have a society of any kind three things are essential—first, a collection of individuals, secondly, these individuals bound together by some common bond, and, thirdly, co-operating towards a common end. Thus, a football club is a society, so is an agricultural association, so is a religious order, so is a political league, so is a parliamentary party, so is a confraternity. In these and similar associations, however, you will observe that the individual is free to join or not to join, to stay or leave as he pleases. For the bond that binds the members together consists in co-operation towards the common end of the particular society to which they belong; and, as will be obvious, they are free to bind themselves by that bond and free to cut themselves off from it. Hence all such societies are voluntary societies.

But there are certain other societies in which there is no choice

but to enter, and wherein the bond of union is independent of their own will in the matter ; for instance, the family and the nation.

It is a recognized maxim that man is by nature a social being. Thus, he is not born nor can he grow up and satisfy his natural, physical, intellectual and moral needs except in the bosom of that primary domestic society which we call the family. Later on the force of necessity, and of those greater needs which grow with years and with the extension of family, obliges him gradually to enter ampler societies of the clan, the district, the barony, the county, the province, the nation. No need to point out that for some years at least each human being is bound by the social bond of family, and later on by the bond of national life. True, an individual may cut himself off from one particular nation, but he can only do this by leaving it and going to another, in which case he becomes bound by the bond of that new state in which he finds himself.

Now, in connexion with societies, there is one point that will be evident at a glance, and it is, that no society of persons who combine and co-operate towards attaining a common end can be imagined without some governing board or central authority, whose precise office it is to combine and direct the efforts of the members towards the attainment of the object for which the society exists. So obvious is this truth that we need do no more than mention it. In the case of most voluntary associations or societies, just as their very existence depends altogether on the will of the members, so does the authority that directs and controls them. But the case is different with the family and the nation. There the authority already exists, and the individual has nothing to do but to accept it ; and, in fact, it is precisely because it does so exist that the society itself possesses a separate and independent existence. Thus, the members of a family form but one social body, precisely because the parental authority at its head is one ; while many families form but one nation, or state, or republic, or kingdom, precisely because there is one central, governing authority, one supreme power, uniting the various elements and directing them towards their end.

It will thus be clear that wherever you have a number of individuals co-operating towards a common end, and employing such means as are suitable towards its attainment, under the guidance and control of a regularly constituted authority, you have a society.

Let us apply this to the Church, as it was in the days after Pentecost. The Church, as all must admit, was composed of numbers of individuals ; it must also be admitted that these pertained to the

institution founded by Christ simply because they had accepted the authority of the Apostles, had believed the doctrine of Christ, had received baptism and had bound themselves to observe the teaching of the Apostles and their guidance, under pain of suffering the loss of their immortal souls. Here, again, we have all the elements that go to constitute a society—we have membership, the conditions of membership, the co-operation towards a common end by the use of definite means, under the direction of a governing body, duly constituted by the Church's Founder and by Him made independent of the members that compose it. With these facts before us, how can we refuse to recognize that our Lord established His Church on the lines of a regularly constituted society in the strictest sense of the word?

Not only is the Church a society, but it is a necessary society—so necessary, indeed, that every human being who wishes to save his immortal soul must be a member of it. As it is each one's bounden duty to save his own soul, and as that salvation can only be secured by membership in the society founded by Christ, it follows that each one who is conscious of this is bound to become a member of the Church and obey the laws that bind its members.

In the mind of our Lord, then, His Church was the society of believers seeking the attainment of eternal life; it was an organized community composed, on the one hand, of a governing body, with St. Peter at its head, and, on the other hand, of members who fulfilled the conditions laid down by Him—that is to say, who believed, were baptized, professed the faith of Christ, and used the means of sanctification, under the guidance of the governing body, with a view to attaining life everlasting.

The Church, then, is a society; and not merely a society, but a necessary society; and not merely a necessary society, but a perfectly independent society, that is, a society forming part of and subject to no other society, but having its own government, its own laws and its own methods, independent of any other body on earth. And in addition to this it is also a visible society.

When we say that a society is visible we do not merely mean to say that it is composed of visible human beings; but we mean that there is something in its constitution that characterizes it, identifies it, and enables us to distinguish it from all other societies with which it may come in contact. The same men may, as we know, belong to more than one society; hence it is not to the individuals composing a society that we must look for the note that differentiates that society from all others. Where, then, are we to look for that note, that characteristic,

that plain, visible, unmistakable mark? We must seek it simply and solely in the constitution and organization of the society. One society is known to be different from another because they are known to have a different constitution and organization; and for this to be known, the constitution and organization of each must be something that can be discerned, something that can be identified, something that can be pointed out, in a word, something visible. In fact, even a secret society must be a visible society, since even a secret society must have its own constitution and organization. Thus, Freemasonry is a secret society; but it has a constitution and organization of its own, and hence is a visible society. In the same way, in times of persecution, the Church was often in hiding, and might under the circumstances be regarded as a secret society; but even then it had its own constitution and organization just as much as in its palmiest days of prosperity, and hence was always a visible society.

To show that the Church was founded as a visible society, all we have to do is to prove that its Divine Founder gave it a definite constitution and organization, and to prove this we need only show that Christ our Lord established in His Church a duly constituted governing body; that He gave that body authority to teach, legislate, issue decrees, and enforce their observance, so much so that they are authorized to exclude from the Church all those who refuse to obey. *All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth—As the Father hath sent Me, so do I send you—Receive ye the Holy Ghost—He who hears you hears Me; and he who despises you despises Me—Go then and teach all nations—Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you—Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.* The Apostles acted on these powers, and proclaimed that they were Christ's ambassadors: *For Christ we are ambassadors,*¹ wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians; while St. Peter spoke of the College of the Apostles as *witnesses pre-ordained by God whom He commanded to preach to the peoples.*² In the same way, St. Paul, in his address to the clergy of Ephesus, unmistakably states that certain men had been appointed by the Holy Ghost as *bishops to rule the Church of God;*³ he also points out to the Corinthians that, in the Church, God has appointed some as Apostles and others for other functions; we know, too, that St. Paul himself ordained priests for the churches in the various regions through which he passed, and that he committed

¹ 2 Cor. v. 20.² Acts x. 41.³ Acts xx. 28.

Crete to the pastoral care of St. Titus, with power to do all that was necessary and to ordain priests in every city.

With all these regulations before our minds, we cannot but conclude that Christ set up a special governing body in the Church, that He established a fundamental difference between the members and the pastors of His Church, and that the teaching and governing powers therein were to be carried out by men appointed either by Himself or by His authority.

Over His Church, then, our Lord placed a special body of men, with instructions and powers to rule, teach, and bear witness. In the execution of their mission they were to have the same powers as Christ Himself; they were to see that the faithful observed all that He had commanded; they were to bind and loose—to make laws and issue decrees that would be ratified in heaven; and so much weight was to be attached to their authority that those who refused to accept their teaching and ruling were to suffer the loss of their immortal souls.

If, then, there is one thing clearer and more certain than another it is, that our Lord established a governing body in His Church, and hence that He founded that Church as a visible society.

The same truth is evident from St. Paul, who in unmistakable language compares the Church to the human body and teaches that it was to be an organized society, and hence visible. It is also evident from the comparisons used by our Lord when speaking of His Kingdom. He compares it to a grain of mustard-seed, which, taking root, grows up into a great tree, in the branches of which the birds of the air find refuge; and especially is the idea of visibility apparent in that passage in which He compares His Kingdom to a fishing-net cast into the sea, and catching both good and bad fish. The same idea, too, is met with in the expressions used in Sacred Scripture to characterize the Church—the Church being spoken of as God's house, fold, flock. Now, the members of a house, under the direction of the head of that house, constitute a society, which is certainly not invisible; a fold and a flock assuredly imply sheep visibly guided by a shepherd.

To conclude: It is nothing more than the simple truth to say that for ages the most prominent doctrine in Christianity was that Christ had constituted His Church as one fold, under one visible governing body, and that all men who desired to be saved had no other alternative than that of becoming members of that fold, that visible society, which He established to preserve and perpetuate His mission on earth.

Thirty-fourth Instruction on the Creed

THE CHURCH ONE AND PERENNIAL

IN our last instruction we saw that our Lord founded and established His Church on the lines of an organized religious body or perfect society, having its own members, its own special end, its own special means, and its own special governing authority. We now proceed to examine certain special features given to that society by its Divine Founder.

I. And, first of all, the evidence of all the available witnesses makes it clear that our Lord founded one visible religious society or Church, and one alone. All that has been said in the preceding instructions points indisputably to this conclusion. The society to which our Lord issued His instructions and commands was always the same, always that which was to be taught and ruled by the Apostolic College, with Peter at its head. There is not the remotest indication of any other society than that founded on the Apostolic College—nay, there is abundant evidence to the contrary,—our Lord made it clear and unmistakable that only in that society could salvation be attained, and that those who refused to hear and obey the constituted authority in that society were to be regarded by Him as guilty of rebellion against Himself.

There are various passages and figures in the New Testament which point to the same conclusion, and deserve mention as bringing out into still clearer light the nature and qualities of that new society.

In all the New Testament there is no more impressive passage than our Lord's discourse at the Last Supper, and especially His prayer for the Apostles: *Holy Father, keep in Thy Name those (the Apostles) whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are . . . I do not pray that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil . . . As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so I also have sent them into the world . . . And not for them only do I pray, but also for those who through their word shall believe in Me, that all may be one as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee,—that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*¹

¹ John xvii. 11, 15, 18, 20, 21.

In these sublime words, which were uttered at the most solemn moment of our Lord's whole career on earth, our Divine Saviour prays first for the Apostles, and next for all who, as a result of the mission He was entrusting to the Apostolic College, were to believe in Him. He prays for all the faithful, or for His Church; and His prayer is, that that Church shall be so perfectly one as to resemble the unity that exists between the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity—His prayer is, that just as the Three Divine Persons make but one God, so all Christians shall make but one Church of God; and as it is impossible that there can be more Gods than one, so is it impossible that there can be more Churches than one. Hence it is that St. Paul exhorts all the faithful to be careful to remain one body and one spirit, as there is but *one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, one God and Father of all*.¹ Now, our Lord's prayer could not but be heard; and hence the true Church of Christ must be one and one alone.

That our Lord intended the Church to be one alone, is evident also from certain expressions of His in which He speaks of the body of believers. First of all, He refers to that body as His sheepfold, and He states that His mission is that all men may hear His word, and that *there shall be one fold and one shepherd*.² And as there cannot be more shepherds than one, so neither can there be more than one Christian fold.

There are two figures, however, which are especially dwelt upon in the New Testament, particularly by St. Paul. The first is that in which the Church is compared to an edifice, the second to an organic body.

As has been repeated over and over again, our Lord promised to build His Church on Peter as its foundation, and to entrust him, as steward, with the keys of His household. Hence it is that St. Paul lays down that the edifice built by our Lord on the Apostles is to grow up into one holy temple in the Lord: *You are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God,—built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord*.³

In the second place, he lays down that the Church is not to be a mere formless mass of individuals, but one organized body, animated by one spirit, and hence a living body; that there consequently is a living connexion between its various parts, uniting them and making

¹ Eph. iv. 5, 6² John x. 16.³ Eph. ii. 19.

them one, so that they work in harmony with each other and with the body at large. Describing the diversity of spiritual gifts possessed by the members of the Church, St. Paul proceeds to compare the Church to the human body. In the human body, he points out, there are many limbs and organs, yet the body is but one. Each limb and organ has its own place and its own office, and each is in sympathy and communication with all the rest, and is subject to one spirit ruling within and pervading all, influencing all. It is the same with the Church—its members are like the limbs of the human body—each receives its own grace from the one spirit that pervades the whole Church, and each has its own duty and office. The grace given is different, but the spirit is the same; the members are many but the body is one: *For in one spirit we are baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bound or free.* On the other hand, he points out that the body does not consist of one limb or organ, but of many, each of which must be in sympathy with the rest and work harmoniously with the rest, that is to say, the human body is a definitely organized body, with a diversity of members and consequently a diversity of offices, yet all pervaded and animated and influenced and united by the same spirit. It is the same with the Church, which is *the body of Christ*, and hence must be one, living and organized.

Bearing this in mind, we need not be surprised to know that Sacred Scripture never speaks of the Christian body as other than one. Thus our Lord promised that *on this rock I will build My Church*; thus, too, St. Paul warns bishops that the Holy Ghost has placed them *to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood*;¹ while the same Apostle speaks of one Church alone as *the pillar and ground of truth*.²

Other witnesses later on speak of the Church in a similar strain. They find the Church prefigured in the ark of Noah, which, as we know, was so much one that only those who were fortunate enough to enter it were saved from the flood. In the same way, they liken the Church to that one seamless garment worn by our Lord, which God would not permit to be torn or divided by the executioners on Calvary; they also dwell on the Church as the Kingdom of God, which is one and one alone, just as its King is one, Jesus Christ, the universal Monarch and absolute Lord of time and eternity. "God is one and one alone," cries out St. Cyprian, the martyr-bishop of Carthage; "one is Christ and one alone; one also is His Church and one His faith

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Whosoever abandons that Church of Christ is an outsider, a stranger, an enemy of His. We cannot have God for our Father, if we have not the Church for our mother."

II. Jesus Christ, then, founded one body of Christians and one alone ; and not only this, but He founded it as a regularly organized society ; and now, having seen that Christ founded one society, and one alone, on earth, the question arises : How long was that one society to last ? Plainly, it was to last as long as its Founder intended it to last. And how long did He intend it to last ? The answer is simple : *All days, even to the consummation of the world* ; in other words, He intended that society to be permanent, perennial, indefectible, so that there never could come a time, as long as time should last, when that society would cease to exist on earth. The Church as founded by our Lord was to be perpetual in its existence. The proof is easy. Our Lord promised that the Church which He was to build on Peter, could be cancelled or destroyed by no power on earth or in hell : *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*¹ All the powers of the evil one (such was our Lord's promise) shall never for an instant prevail over the Church ; for if that Church did even for one instant cease to exist, our Lord's promise would that very moment come to naught—the gates of hell would prevail against it, and His word would pass away—a thing that cannot for a moment be supposed.

Until three or four centuries ago, such was the answer that was unhesitatingly given by all Christendom. But at that dreadful epoch of change and upheaval men, for the first time, were found to proclaim that this was not the case ; that the answer was not correct ; that, as a matter of fact, "for the space of the last eight hundred years and more the whole Christian world, laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children, had been altogether drowned in abominable idolatry." Heretofore Christianity had taken our Lord to be speaking seriously, when He said to the teaching body which He had set up in His Church : *I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*, and when He promised that same body that God would send the Spirit of truth, *that He may abide with you for ever* ; but now men rose up and loudly proclaimed, and got millions of human souls to believe them, that the only body on earth claiming to be the successors of the teaching body established by our Lord were "the authors of all error, ignorance, blindness, hypocrisy, and idolatry."

¹ Matt. xvi. 18.

Right opposite to all this we have our Divine Saviour's promise, made to that visible body which He had set up on earth as the depository of His truth and the minister of His grace—an absolute and unconditional promise made in that most solemn moment when He was sending forth that body to teach and baptize and instruct all nations, to observe all that He had commanded : *I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* And note the unchangeable *I am*—now and forever ; every day and for all days ; in days of trial and in days of triumph ; in days when wickedness dares to creep into high places, and in days when virtue shines brightly on the mountain-top ; in days when the Church has to mourn over faithless children, and in days when she is the admiration of the world. Come what may, there still remain the cheering words of omnipotent power addressed by a merciful God to His representative body on earth : *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*

Again, the mission entrusted by our Lord to that body which He set to rule His Church, was that of saving souls. Now, as long as the world lasts there will be souls to save ; and hence it was that when commissioning the governing body in His Church to teach and baptize all nations, He promised to be with them *all days even to the end of the world.* Our Divine Lord, then, solemnly promised to be united with the governing body in the Church, not merely occasionally, nor from time to time, but *all days*—not merely for a certain period after its foundation, but to the very end of time. He could not remain united with His Church all days to the end of time if that Church did not exist all days ; and hence His continuous presence necessarily involves and presupposes the permanence of the governing body to whom it had been promised.

True, indeed, the individuals whom He then addressed, and who constituted the governing body in that new society which He left behind Him on earth, passed away to their reward in the course of time. His promise, then, could not apply to the Apostles merely in their individual capacity. And how did it apply ? The answer is, that it applied to them in their official, their corporate capacity, so that while the individuals composing the governing body might die, the body itself was to remain morally the same for all time.

Consider what happens in any society and this will be quite clear. A society lasts as long as its original organization and constitution remain substantially unchanged. Individual members may come and go, may increase or diminish, may join or leave, may be born or die ; the individuals composing its central authority may do likewise ; but

so long as their place is duly and lawfully filled by others to succeed them, that governing body lives on unchanged. Thus it is a legal maxim that in a stable monarchy the King never dies; the same may be said of the President of a republic,—a new President may be elected periodically, but as long as the election is constitutional, the republic is the same. The one thing necessary towards the permanence and stability of any particular society is its central authority—so long as that authority remains, and is transmitted constitutionally, the society itself remains substantially the same. Introduce a change, set aside the original central authority, establish another in its place, and you at once found a new society, even though the individuals composing it are the same as before. Thus, when the people of the United States set aside the authority of England and established the Republic, with a ruling power of its own, they formed a new society, a new power, a new nation, which remains to the present day, simply because the constitution then set up has been handed down unbroken and unchanged.

But though men may set aside the established order of earthly things, they cannot interfere with those of Heaven—they may change the nature of societies founded by themselves; but they cannot interfere with that which is founded by God. And hence no one is free to set aside the authority, the governing body, which He has established in His Church. That must remain ever the same, always and at all times, because He has promised to be with it always and at all times.

Thirty-fifth Instruction on the Creed

THE CHURCH INFALLIBLE AND ROMAN

So far we have seen that to continue His mission on earth our Lord founded and organized a society called the Church ; that He founded but one such society ; that He provided it with a governing body to which He assigned certain duties and entrusted certain powers ; that at the head of this body He placed a chief to whom He gave the fullest authority ; and that He intended the society, thus founded and constituted, to last always to the end of time.

Go ye therefore, said our Lord to that body which He had placed over His Church, *and teach all nations. . . and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* Clearly, then, our Lord intended that one of the chief duties of that body was that of teaching—and teaching, not merely for a brief period, for a few years, for one or two generations, but down to the very end of time. And just as clearly was it His intention that in the discharge of that duty they were to be divinely guided and directed by His abiding presence—were to be infallible. But as this is a point of the greatest importance, it will be useful to dwell on it at some length.

The Apostles were but men, and we know how petty and feeble is the mind of man. To-day men despise what yesterday they lauded to the skies—one day they trample on what they adored the day before. How many ideas, opinions, beliefs, theories, doctrines, have men changed, transformed, denied, admitted or rejected in the past ! The history of humanity is the story of variations in ideas and opinions. Nay, the most obvious truths, the most incontestable axioms have not escaped the destroying hand of ignorance and prejudice.

On the other hand, if there was one thing more than another that our Lord insisted on, it was that His followers should accept this teaching with undoubting faith. Men may be rich or they may be poor ; they may be learned or they may be ignorant ; they may be rulers or they may be subjects ; but in one respect they are all the same,—if they wish to be saved, they must believe, they must yield assent to all His teaching—not merely His teaching on certain

prominent points, but His teaching in all things: *All things whatsoever I have commanded you—He that believeth not shall be condemned.*

How, then, did our Lord provide for these two contingencies? What provision did He make so that the truths which He had entrusted to a body of weak and ignorant men should be preserved entire, inviolate, inviolable? And, on the other hand, what provision did He make to enable mankind to yield belief to such truths without any shadow of doubt? The answer is simple: by endowing with the gift of infallibility that visible, perennial body which He had placed over His Church. That this was the course He actually took is the unanimous testimony of all our witnesses.

Our first witness is St. Matthew, who relates how our Lord declared that He intended to build His Church on a rock, and that all the powers of hell would never prevail against the Church thus built. Now, there is but one way in which the powers of hell could prevail against the Church, and that is, by seducing it to false teaching. But the Church, so our Lord declares, can never be prevailed over by Satan, and hence can never impart false teaching, and hence is immune from error, and hence is infallible.

The same witness tells how our Lord commissioned the governing body in His Church to go forth over the whole world, to teach all nations, and to see that they observed all that He had prescribed; and not only this, but He assured them that He would *be with them all days, even to the consummation of the world*. Our Lord here makes a promise, an absolute and unconditional promise, every word of which is remarkable, especially the expression *I am with you*. This expression, which occurs some scores of times in Sacred Scripture, has always a very special import wherever it is used by God, and that import is this: it invariably conveys an assurance of success by means of unfailing and extraordinary assistance on the part of God. Thus He encourages Isaac: *Do not fear, for I am with thee*; ¹ He does the same to Jacob: *Return, and I will be with thee*; ² Moses has fears that he will fail in his mission, and the Lord simply replies: *I will be with thee*; ³ and to Josue He says: *As I have been with Moses, so will I be with thee*; ⁴ and so on. In every case the promise means success through Divine assistance in the execution of the task which is being imposed. Now, the task which He imposed on the Apostolic College was in a special way that of teaching; and hence His promise means that their teaching will be successful because He will be with them to

¹ Gen. xvi. 24.

² Ib. xxxi. 3.

³ Exod. iii. 12.

⁴ Josue i. 5.

assist them. But by no stretch of the imagination could it be regarded as successful if they were capable of false teaching, which comes to this, that our Lord intended His teaching body to be infallible.

Our next important witness is St. John, who relates how our Lord spoke to the twelve at the Last Supper; how He promised to send the Spirit of Truth, who was *to abide with them for ever*; who was to *teach them all things, and bring to their minds all things whatsoever* He should have said to them; and who was *to teach them all truth*. The Holy Ghost, then, was to abide with the Apostolic College; He was to teach them all truth; He was to bring back to their mind all that Jesus Christ had taught; so that they were to know all His doctrine, possess all His Gospel, and understand thoroughly all the truths which He had come into the world to reveal. Here, again, the Apostolic College is guaranteed against error, not merely once or twice, not merely for a year or two or ten, but for ever.

Another witness is St. Paul, who calls the Church *the pillar and ground of truth*. Now, if this means anything it means that the Church is the strong, firm, unshaken support of the truths of revelation; and this can only mean that the teaching body in charge of these truths is strong, firm, secure, unfaltering, and consequently immune from all danger of wavering or falling into error.

Finally, the very belief which our Lord exacts from all men who do not wish to suffer the loss of their souls imperatively demands infallibility in the body to whom He entrusted His doctrine: *Go ye and teach all nations . . . whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be condemned*. On pain of eternal damnation, therefore, men were to *believe*, that is, to accept without the least hesitation or doubt all the truths which our Lord had commissioned His teaching body to convey to all nations. There was to be no picking or choosing; men were not to be free to accept one doctrine and reject another—they were to accept all; and they were to accept them on the authority of that body whom Jesus Christ had sent as His representatives and messengers. Now, before I can believe firmly and beyond all doubt in the tidings a messenger brings me I must be convinced the messenger is trustworthy, and is capable neither of deceiving nor of being deceived. And in the case in question there could be no real belief in the teaching of Christ's representative body if men were not first convinced that that body could not err.

It is certain that only those who believed and accepted their teaching were to be regarded as belonging to the Church founded by Christ. This simply means that profession of the same faith was

an essential condition of membership. It is equally certain that from the beginning there have been heresies and schisms,—men rose up against the received teaching, they picked and chose, they refused to accept certain points of Christian teaching, and on the basis of their refusal they formed themselves into sects independent of the Church. In acting thus it is obvious that they proceeded on the assumption that the teaching of the Church on the points in question was fallible. The only possible justification of such a step would be the belief that the Church could err,—if the Church could err they had as good a right to their view as anyone else. But what would such a view lead to? To this, that division, separation and schism are justifiable. But, on the other hand, if we are bound to believe and hold that the Church must ever be one, and that separation from the society founded by Christ can never be justifiable, we must first of all hold that the teaching authority in the Church is infallible in deciding what articles of belief are to be accepted as conditions for membership in the Church.

Jesus Christ, then, who has poured forth into the bosom of His Church the precious treasure of the truths necessary to salvation, and has made that Church the perpetual depository of these truths, could not but provide His Church with an unfailing means of preserving them intact for the salvation of mankind down to the end of time. Such a means He provided in His own continuous presence and assistance, rendering it impossible for the teaching Church to compromise or distort the deposit He had entrusted to its keeping and care. Now, this continuous, abiding, permanent, all-powerful assistance is nothing else than the gift of infallibility.

To sum up all that has gone before: Let us suppose it is the eve of our Lord's Ascension into heaven, and that several of His disciples are gathered together in dismay at the news that He is about to leave them; and let us also suppose that they thus address Him: "Oh, Master, what is to become of us? who is to teach us? who guide us? who protect us when Thou art gone?" His answer, as we know from the New Testament, would be something like this: "Fear not, *I will not leave you orphans*. I came on earth to be a Saviour to all men, and to accomplish this purpose I have founded a Church that is to last unbroken till the end of time. Here is what I have done: out of My disciples I selected My little band of Apostles; I trained them up carefully for the work I have for them to do; and finally I gave them special parting instructions at the Last Supper, the night before My death. It was never My intention to remain

always upon the earth,—I came to begin the work of salvation ; and now, at that great moment of My earthly life, I set about providing against the danger of My Apostles forgetting My teaching or interpreting it erroneously. And, accordingly, I said to these twelve : *I go to the Father, but I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, the Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth . . . you shall know Him because He shall abide with you and shall be in you . . . He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you. . . . He shall give testimony of Me, and you shall give testimony also, because you are with Me from the beginning.* You thus see what My plan is : the Holy Ghost and My Apostolic College will work together in preaching My Gospel—the Apostolic College will teach, but it will not be alone, for the Holy Ghost will be with it.

“ Yet, as sorrow filled their hearts at the announcement of My departure, I said to them : *It is expedient to you that I go ; for if I do not go, the Paraclete will not come to you ; but if I go, I will send Him to you.* And finally I repeated once more : *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot hear them now ; but when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come He will teach you all truth.* Bear these words well in mind ; ponder over them and do not lose sight of their import. For they mean that the Holy Spirit will for ever abide with the Apostolic College and teach it all truth—not only all I have taught Myself, but more besides ; so that it will forget nothing, will understand all My revelation, and shall teach My people faithfully and unerringly.

“ This is why very recently I gave utterance to that alternative that seems so hard to you : *He that believeth the teaching of that body shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned.* You think this is a hard saying that I should ask you under pain of eternal damnation to believe everything that these poor fishermen teach. A hard saying indeed it would be did I not guarantee that whenever My representative body teaches, the Holy Spirit will teach through them ; so that if you believe that body you believe the Holy Ghost ; while by refusing to believe it you refuse to believe the Holy Ghost.

“ And now, I ask you: Is not this an easy and plain and most effectual way of enabling men to know the truths they are to believe in order to be saved ? All that is required is goodwill. I have done My part—I have sent My representatives in My name and in My place, and I have guaranteed that the Holy Spirit shall always abide with that body and guide its teaching, so that it shall teach the truth

and nothing but the truth. In their corporate capacity that body will take My place, will found and rule and teach My Church, down to the end of time, and that Church shall be for ever the Apostolic Church."

Our Lord disappears from the scene of His earthly labours, and His place is taken by the Apostolic College, to whom He had said : *As the Father sent Me, so I send you ; and : Go and teach all nations ; and behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world ; and : He that heareth you heareth Me ; and : He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned.* From these solemn instructions and statements of our Lord it is clear that His representative body is to teach, and all men are to believe. They are to believe first in the body itself, and then in the truths that body teaches. That this was the plan followed we learn from what happened on the day of Pentecost, when, to prove that the Apostles were divine messengers, a great miracle was wrought, with the result that the people began by believing in the Apostles with full and firm faith, so that they were ready to accept all that the Apostles should tell them ; and then they gradually through this belief acquired a full knowledge of Christian doctrine ; hence it is that they are described later on as *persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles.*

In His plan for the salvation of mankind, then, our Lord places reliance mainly on the teaching and preaching of a living body of men ; in His plan the Holy Ghost was to be with that living body ; this living body was to be the depository of all truth ; it was to forget nothing that our Lord taught ; and with the help of the Holy Ghost it was to understand many things that our Lord had not thought it well to teach. In one word, our Lord's plan was that this living body should be the storehouse of heavenly truth. On the other hand, the early Christians clearly understood that their business was to persevere in the doctrine of that living body, and to be ready always to believe whatever it had taught, was teaching, or might teach in the future.

The Apostles had not been long engaged on their mission when they were called on solemnly to use the power given them. Jews and Gentiles had met together in the infant Church, and all had gone well till Satan whispered into the souls of the Jewish converts that certain of their venerable customs and traditions should be preserved in the Christian Church. Discord and strife were near at hand, when the Apostolic voice was heard : *It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and*

to us, and the trouble was at an end,—peace was restored and the faithful bowed to the Apostolic ruling, for they knew that their clear duty was to *persevere in the doctrine of the Apostles*, that is, to bow to the teaching of that living, divinely-assisted body whom the Saviour of men had made the authoritative exponents of the truths of faith.

We have now seen that to continue His mission, which was that of saving souls, our Lord founded a Church which was to take the form of a regularly organized society, consisting of members and of a duly constituted governing body under one supreme head; that this society was to be one, and one alone; and that its organization, its governing body, was to be perennial, visible and infallible. Such was our Lord's will, and since His word cannot fail we must unhesitatingly hold that the Church thus founded has never for a moment failed, never can fail, and hence that it must exist on earth exactly as He constituted it. And now arises the all-important question: Which of all the bodies claiming to be the Church of Christ is the true Church; where is the true Church to be found?

All-important as it is, it is easily answered. If the Church of Christ still exists on earth—and, as we know, it can never cease to exist—assuredly it must be identified with the only body that claims to possess all the qualities and characteristics attached to it by its Divine Founder. That one body is the Roman Catholic Church, which of all the various competitors is the only one that claims to be a visible, perennial, indefectible, and infallible society, ruled by a regularly organized governing body, under the supreme authority of one sovereign head. Each of the various other bodies claims to possess one or more of these features; but not one of them even ventures to claim to possess them all. Thus the Greek Church refuses to acknowledge that the Church must have one supreme head on earth; the various Protestant sects not only refuse to admit that the Church must have one supreme head on earth, but they one and all lay down that there is no such thing in the Church as a governing body divinely guaranteed against error, and that as a matter of fact the Church has erred and fallen away from the truth.

An example will bring out the force of this argument. Suppose there are a certain number of claimants to an inheritance; suppose it is absolutely certain that one of them is the rightful heir; suppose all these appear one day in court before the competent judge; suppose too, that the only way of identifying the genuine claimant is by means of certain qualities and qualifications which the real claimant

undoubtedly must possess ; suppose now that, when all are assembled before him, the judge reads out a full list of these qualifications, and that having done so one, and only one, of the competitors lays claim to the possession of all these without a single exception : there can be no doubt but that judgment would go by default, and that the judge would be bound to assign the inheritance to that particular claimant.

It is the same with the various bodies that claim to be the true Church of Christ—they all claim to possess some or other of the qualities of the true Church ; but only one, the Roman Catholic Church, claims to possess all the qualities which, as we have seen, the Church founded by Jesus Christ must possess all days, even to the consummation of the world.

Thirty-sixth Instruction on the Creed

THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH—UNITY

IN the preceding instructions we have followed step by step the course taken by our Divine Lord in securing the perpetuation of His mission on earth. We saw that He founded and established a society, or visibly organized body, the members of which were to consist of all those who are baptized and who really believe and profess His teaching. We also saw that He founded but one such society, and one alone; that it was to be composed of members under a definitely constituted governing body, with one supreme ruler at its head; that thus constituted it was to be visible, perennial, and infallible; and finally we saw that this body is to be identified in the Roman Catholic Church, for the simple reason that the Roman Catholic Church is the only body that really claims to be exactly such as our Divine Lord made His Church to be.

But as it is of the utmost importance to have at hand ready and abundant means of identifying the true Church of Christ it will be desirable to examine the means of identification from other points of view. Accordingly, just as in the preceding instructions we traced the Church downwards from the body founded by our Lord nearly nineteen hundred years ago until we identified it with the Roman Catholic Church of to-day, so now we purpose to take the opposite course and to examine the claims of the various bodies who look upon themselves as constituting or belonging to the true Church.

I. Though the various bodies that call themselves the Church of Christ are almost countless in number, yet they may conveniently be reduced to three. First of all, there is the old Church, that is to say, the Roman Catholic Church, which, to use the graphic words of Lord Macaulay, "carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre," whose line of Supreme Pontiffs "we can trace back in an unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends." It is that old Church which, as the same writer

points out, "saw the commencement of all governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world"; and that "was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Athens, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca."

Next, then, is the Eastern Church, comprising the various Christian communities, whose adherents are found among Russians and Greeks, and the origin of which dates from the year 1054, when its real founder, Cerularius, broke utterly with the supremacy of the Pope, and founded what is known to-day under the general name of the Greek Church.

And, finally, we have to examine the claims of those multitudinous sects, called Protestant, which are scattered all over Northern Europe and North America, and which, either directly or indirectly, owe their origin to Luther and Calvin in the sixteenth century.

In examining the claims of each of these bodies to be regarded as the true Church of Christ, it will be quite sufficient to see how far they possess the four notes, or marks, or badges which, as we shall see, are and always have been regarded as characteristic features of the true Church, and which in fact were formulated as such by the Fathers of the Council of Nice, as follows: "I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." Hence, according to the Nicene Creed, which is generally accepted by Protestants, we must hold by that Church which is *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*.

Not only are these four exterior marks or characteristics generally acknowledged by those who profess to be Christians; not only are they assigned by Reason, Scripture, the Creeds, and the Fathers, as the true marks by which to distinguish the Church; but they are of so simple a nature that even those who have received little or no education can discover them if they but take ordinary pains. Let us take an example. Suppose that at a State function someone were to ask you how could he recognize the Prince of Wales; it would be no use to reply that he is the king's eldest son, or heir to the throne, or the like. The proper, sensible answer would be to mention certain exterior marks or indications by which to identify him, such as his appearance, the colour of his clothes, the ornaments he is wearing, the room in which he is to be found. With these tokens in his possession, the inquirer could have little difficulty in identifying him. In the same way, to identify the true Church the average man has only to open his eyes and use plain common sense, once he knows that

that Church must be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The Church that visibly possesses these four badges will be the true Church ; while any Church that falls short in even one of them must be rejected as a false Church—the work of men, and not of God.

II. And first, as regards unity. Our Lord, as we have seen, founded but one Church on earth. Not only this, but He intended that Church to be endowed with the mark of unity, that is to say, He intended that the members of His Church should be bound together by certain exterior bonds, that those who are bound by these bonds belong to His Church, and that those who are not bound by them are outside it. Now, there can be no doubt but that the bond binding the Church's members is this, that they profess the truths He has taught, and use the means which He has provided, under the control and administration of a duly constituted governing body, in order to attain the salvation of their souls. Now this means neither more nor less than that in the Church there must be unity of faith, unity of worship, and unity of government.

As for the necessity of unity of faith, we have our Lord's commission, directing the governing body of His Church to go into the whole world, and teach all nations down to the end of time *to observe all things* whatsoever that had been prescribed by Him. They were, then, to teach all His doctrine, neither more nor less. Now this implies that they knew all His teaching exactly ; and this in turn implies that those who teach contradictory or incompatible doctrines have no commission from God, and hence do not belong to His true Church. He who bears a divine commission to teach cannot teach inconsistently or changeably,—those to whom He has given the commission and authority to teach in His name must be unchangeably consistent.

In the same way, when St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, urges them to remember that they have one body, one spirit, one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, he clearly puts unity of faith on the same level with things that are absolutely one. Wisely did St. Cyprian, in the third century, cry out : " There is but one God, and one Christ, and one faith, and a people joined in one solid body with the cement of concord. This unity cannot suffer a division, nor this one body bear to be disjointed. He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother." Such are the words of the great martyr-bishop of Africa ; and such, too, has been the unanimous teaching of Christendom and of the Church down to the sixteenth century.

That the Church of Christ must have unity of worship, that the rulers in His Church were to form one body amongst men, that this very unity of theirs was to be a visible token that He had sent them, and that between head and members, between rulers and ruled, there should be the closest intercommunion in worship, is clear from our Lord's beautiful prayer at the Last Supper: *That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee ; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me ;* while St. Paul reminds the warring Corinthians that as they partake of the same sacraments, they ought to be united as members of one body.

That in the true Church there must be unity of government, follows from all that has been said in previous instructions, wherein it has been shown that our Lord founded but one society with a single governing body under one supreme head. A perfectly organized society must have one supreme governor,—where there is more than one supreme governor there will be found more than one society. Our Lord often speaks of the Church as His Kingdom. Now, men are regarded as subjects of one kingdom when they are subjects of one king—if there were two kings claiming supreme authority in the same territory, we could hardly speak of unity in that kingdom. In the same way a sheepfold implies the idea of one shepherd ; one foundation implies that the structure raised on it is one ; one head implies that the members under it form one body. Now, as our Lord established one foundation, one shepherd, one supreme ruler, for His Church, it must be acknowledged that the true Church must possess unity of government.

To sum up all this in a few words : The rights which Jesus Christ confers on His Church, the powers which He puts in her hands, the authority with which He invests her—all clearly suppose unity. If the Church may be nothing more than a conglomeration of parts, a mass of discordant sects, how could our Lord have uttered these words of such weighty import : *He who hears you hears Me ; and he who despises you despises Me ?*¹ Why, it would be possible at one and the same time to obey several warring authorities, to comply with contradictory precepts, and to profess Yes and No on the self-same point. It would be lawful to listen at one and the same time to Arius and Nestorius and Pelagius and Luther and Calvin, as well as to the Roman Church which has condemned them all ! No ; the Church can be but one—the members composing it must hold and profess the

same faith, partake of the same sacraments, and obey the directions of the governing body which Christ has set over them.

And now let us see how far the Greek Church or the Protestant Church or the Catholic Church possesses the great note of unity.

How far the Greek Church possesses the note of unity will appear from a brief glance at a page or two of history. From the separation from Rome down to the middle of the sixteenth century the Patriarch of Constantinople was recognized as spiritual head by practically all the Christians of the East. But about that time the Russian Patriarch, deeming it unbecoming his dignity and nationality to be subject to a superior under Turkish rule, decided to separate, and accordingly proclaimed himself the one and absolute head of all the Russian dioceses. He was supported by the clergy as well as by the civil authorities, and thus the Russian Church became independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Peter the Great, however, had himself proclaimed supreme head of the faithful in his dominions, abolished the patriarchal dignity, and, in 1720, created a council, nominated by himself, which was to be supreme in matters of religion. Thus was the Greek Church split up into two distinct bodies, each absolutely independent of the other.

The example was too good not to find imitators. Greece having re-acquired her civil independence from Turkey about a century ago decided that it would be a good thing to possess religious independence also, and accordingly cutting herself off from the jurisdiction of Constantinople she abolished the patriarchal dignity and set up instead a council called the Holy Synod, which was to be the supreme authority in matters of religion. Thus far in the Greek Church we find three supreme authorities, and consequently three Churches, independent each of the other, and bound by not a single real bond.

Nor was this the end. Within recent times three other Churches—Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Servia—have cut themselves off from the Patriarch of Constantinople, have set up each a supreme authority, and thus have become independent Churches; so that we now have six absolutely independent Eastern Churches—the Turkish, the Russian, the Greek, the Bulgarian, the Bosnian, and the Servian—governed by six absolutely independent heads. This means that there are six independent societies; and this in turn means that the Eastern Churches do not possess the note of unity. Six heads imply six different individuals; six shepherds, each working independently, imply six folds; six heads of houses imply six different families, even when these families are related. And six independent spiritual heads imply

anything at all but the one body, the one fold, the one family of Jesus Christ, that is to say, His true Church, which is His one spouse, and which must remain one to the very end of time.

As regards the note of unity in the Protestant Church, it is safe to say that the only point on which Protestants are really at one is in their hostility or opposition to the Catholic Church. The very principle underlying Protestantism inevitably leads to endless inconsistency, dissension, division, contradictory beliefs and practices. Having adopted as their starting-point the principle of the Bible and the Bible alone, interpreted by each individual for himself, the reformers at once put this principle into practice, with the result that the one mark that distinguishes the Protestant body, taken as a whole, is the absence of unity in any shape or form.

No sooner had Luther set up the principle of individual interpretation, than his followers, acting on his own principle, proceeded to show that his teaching was erroneous. They wrote and preached against him and against each other, each founding his teaching on the Bible, and the Bible alone. In vain did Luther denounce them; in vain did he threaten to return to the Catholic Church—he had put a weapon into their hands, and he could not blame them if they used it—he could not be surprised if their contradictions and dissensions became the scandal of Christendom.

Thus, Luther had taught that faith alone suffices and that good works are not necessary to salvation. His favourite follower went still further and pronounced them to be a hindrance to salvation. Melancthon went into the opposite extreme and not only admitted the necessity of good works, but held that they were prior to God's grace. Nor did these exponents of the right of each man to interpret the Scripture in his own way stop short with disagreeing and quarrelling—their principle of private judgment led to mutual persecution, tumult, rebellion, bloodshed, and anarchy. The Lutheran league desolated Germany for more than a century. The Lutherans put Orellius to death for denying the Real Presence, which Luther had held so firmly as to declare that those who denied it were heretics and damned souls, for whom it was not even lawful to pray. Zwinglius pronounced sentence of death against the Anabaptists, and had his sentence duly carried out on Felix Mans at Zurich. Calvin had two who disagreed with him put to death at Geneva. In Protestant England frequent executions took place on account of religion; while there was not a murder nor a massacre perpetrated by the Cromwellians in Ireland which they were not able to justify by passages from Sacred Scripture.

“Persecution,” says Hallam, “is the deadly original sin of the reformed Churches.”

The days of bloodshed and strife on account of religion have happily passed away, but dissension and contradiction still dog the footsteps of Protestants. English Protestantism now reckons within its bosom about two hundred sects, each claiming to be right, and each differing from the other on important points.

Thirty-seventh Instruction on the Creed

UNITY AND SANCTITY

IN our last instruction we saw that the true Church possesses certain notes by which the average individual is enabled to identify that Church amidst the many false claimants that present themselves. We also dwelt on what is meant by the note of unity, and having examined the claims of the Greek and Protestant Churches to this note, we saw that neither of them possessed it. And consequently we are warranted in concluding that the Catholic Church alone possesses the note of unity.

But as we are frequently brought into contact with various sections of Protestants, as their writings force themselves on our notice, and as they ceaselessly reiterate their claims to be regarded as the true Church, it will be useful to dwell at greater length on the English Protestant Church, and her daughters, the Protestant Church of Ireland and the Episcopal Church of America, with their countless off-shoots in the British Islands, America and the Colonies. To form a correct estimate as to how unity has fared in the Established Church it will be well to glance at the history of that Church during the past two centuries.

If ever there was a Church that started with a fair trial and was well provided with means for a successful mission, assuredly it was the Established Church. It had wealthy sees and richly-endowed parishes, with thousands of well-paid clergy scattered all over the land. Yet after a hundred years' trial the historian had to record "the growth of impiety and the general deadness of religion"; he had to record how religion was made "the principal subject of mirth and ridicule"; he had to record "her neglect of the masses of the people, the corruption and immorality of her clergy, the glaring contradictions of her creed, and her unblushing prevarications with regard to her vital principle or rule of faith, her narrow intolerance and persecuting spirit . . . together with her egregious failure in carrying out her mission"; he had to record how all this led to a revulsion of feeling against her and drove men like Wesley to evolve a system of his own on the basis of that private judgment which she

had taught him. Others, using the same principle, imitated Wesley, started similar movements, and in the natural course of events each new sect split up into many more, until we now find nearly two hundred religious denominations having registered places of worship in England and Wales. Here are a few samples: Church of England, Church of Scotland, Church of the People, Presbyterian Church of England, Presbyterian Baptists, Reformed Presbyterians, Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Modern Methodists, New Methodists, Temperance Methodists, United Free Methodists, Welsh Wesleyan Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists, Methodist Reform, Wesleyans, Wesleyan Reformers, Wesleyan Reform Glory Band, German Wesleyans, Baptists, General Baptists, General Baptist New Connexion, Particular Baptists, Presbyterian Baptists, Union Baptists, Unitarian Baptists, Evangelists, Evangelical Free Church, Evangelical Mission. Christian Evangelists, Free Evangelical Christians; not to mention, the Army of the Lord, nor the Believers in the Divine Visitation of Joanna Southcote; the Advent Christians, nor the Christian Pioneers; the Christian Israelites, nor the Church of Progress; the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, nor the Crusade Mission Army; the Hosanna Army, nor the Hallelujah Band; the Lay Christians, nor the Latter-day Saints; the Loving Brethren, nor the Mission of Love; the Moravians, nor the Mormons; the Nazarenes, nor the New Jerusalem; the Positivists, nor the Peculiar People; the Quakers, nor the Ranters; the Recreative Religionists, nor the Red Ribbon Army; the Refuge Methodists, nor the Revival Band; the Salem Society, nor the Seventh Day Baptists; the Strict Baptists, nor the Strictly Undenominational; the Universal Christians, nor the Unsectarians.

And thus, having driven at least half her children out of her bosom, owing to her narrowness, tyranny and neglect, she reverses her engines and says: Believe what you like, reject what you like, only do not desert me, let me remain the National Church. And her followers take her advice—her Bishops and her clergy solemnly express the hope “that the time will never come when the members of the Church of England will not be allowed to hold extreme doctrines on the one side and on the other,” and accordingly the highest authorities in the Church of England have declared that a member of that Church is free to hold Baptismal regeneration or no Baptismal regeneration; the Real Presence or the real absence; the Sacrifice of the Altar or the negation of such sacrifice; the necessity of Confirmation or the superstition of Confirmation; the Invocation of the Saints or the denial of the lawfulness of such invocation; prayer for the dead

or the belief that such prayer is offensive to God ; the validity of absolution or the opinion that the priest has no such power ; and so on, and so on.

True, indeed, the ministers of the Anglican Church sign certain articles on accepting office ; but, as they hold themselves at liberty to understand these articles in any sense they please, and as there is no authority amongst them that claims to be able to decide what is the true sense, or that has power to punish those who stretch the sense to breaking point and beyond it, small wonder if the Anglican Church embraces within its ample bosom those who hold contradictory opinions on points of the most fundamental importance.

It is clear, then, that in the Anglican Church there can be no such thing as unity of belief or unity of government ; while as for unity of worship, all that need be said is that in the celebration of the Eucharistic rite one person who partakes of it is at perfect liberty to believe that it is nothing more than a mere memorial of something that has happened long ago, while his neighbour is equally at liberty to believe that it is the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ.

And now contrast all this with the Catholic Church. Travel over the wide world ; penetrate into the remotest regions of America ; visit the most distant islands of Oceania ; turn your steps towards the wilds of Asia and Africa ; enter any village or town or city in Europe ; wherever you find Catholics, interrogate them—the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the youth and the adult, the civilized nations of Europe and the red skins of America—no matter what their race, nationality, language, education—and you will find this, that all profess the same faith, partake of the same sacraments, assist at the same sacrifice, and obey their lawful pastors under one and the same supreme head whom they look upon as the successor of St. Peter. The like has never been seen on earth in any other body. In the Catholic Church alone will you find this phenomenon—a Church spread throughout the world, with subjects in every land, belonging to a hundred different nationalities, speaking a hundred different languages, divided by every condition of human life, and yet utterly at one in matters of faith, so that one and the same doctrine is everywhere taught, one and the same faith is everywhere professed, and one and the same practice everywhere observed,—and finding this you must, if you are a reasonable man, bow down and say, *The finger of God is here.*

The Catholic Church, then, and the Catholic Church alone, possesses the note of unity ; and hence, without going any farther, we

should be warranted in concluding that the Catholic Church alone is the true Church ; but to leave no room for excuse we shall proceed to examine the claims of each body to the notes of Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity.

That the true Church must be holy is evident from her Founder's promise to be with her all days in teaching men to observe His commands, as well as from the fact that the purpose for which He established the Church was to continue the holy work which He had come on earth to inaugurate: *Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, . . . that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.*¹ Now the very least that can be concluded from these considerations is that no Church really true can teach unholy doctrine, that the doctrine of the true Church must be holy, and that she must be successful in securing holiness to countless souls who earnestly use the means of sanctification which she holds out to them. And, as the Gospel puts it beyond doubt that our Lord calls some to a state of perfection which is not necessary or possible to the average Christian: *If thou wilt be perfect, said He to the young man who had come to Him for advice, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, . . . and come follow Me;*² and as this perfection plainly consists in following a certain path that is not of obligation but of counsel, it follows that any Church that claims to represent Christ must encourage those practices which He encouraged and which are known as the Evangelical Counsels.

This much being borne in mind, we now turn to enquire how far the various claimants are entitled to be regarded as possessing the note of sanctity.

As regards the Greek Church, we must not forget that when she broke off from Rome she retained, and still continues to retain, almost all the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church, and hence it is not easy to institute a comparison in these respects, since to do so would amount to comparing the Catholic Church with herself. But when we remember the degradation and slavery of the clergy of the Eastern Church and her utter lack of missionary effort, and when we contrast the sterility of the modern Greek Church with the glories of the days of Athanasius and Basil, Gregory and Chrysostom, we cannot but open our eyes to the fact that eminent sanctity is no characteristic of the Greek Churches of to-day.

That the fundamental principles of Protestant teaching do not

¹ Eph. v. 27.

² Matt. xix. 21.

make for sanctity or morality will be obvious from what was laid down in our last instruction with regard to the sects and aberrations of Protestantism. This does not mean that all Protestant teaching is erroneous or corrupt: quite the contrary. For we know that when the reformers entered on their work they did not destroy all that existed before them; they simply grafted new ideas and principles on to the system of religion and morality which had been in use for centuries. And hence it must not be forgotten that the peoples who embraced the reformation took with them much of the old Catholic teaching and tradition, so that apart from matters of worship, which were almost completely changed, much of the Catholic system of morals remained just as it was before, and unconsciously acted on the daily lives of those who thought they had left it completely behind them. The result of this is that it need cause no surprise to find many and many an upright, conscientious Protestant whose life might well be imitated by many and many a Catholic.

But if Protestantism is to be tested on the score of sanctity, the test must be made, not with regard to the ideas and feelings which it derives from the old Catholic Church, but simply and solely along the lines of the new principles and new doctrines which it set up in place of those it tried to sweep away.

And now let us look at a few of the most fundamental principles that underlie the whole Protestant system. First and foremost, there is the principle of individual interpretation, which obviously justifies a man in holding or following any doctrine, even the most immoral, provided he is satisfied that he finds it in the Bible. The result of this principle soon became apparent. The foundation of Luther's system is that men are saved by faith alone, that their actions are of no avail, that even their best works are sinful, that the grossest sins do no harm to the elect, that no sin but unbelief can cause damnation, and that in man there is no such thing as free-will. Calvin went further, if that were possible, and taught that independently of their acts, and without any fault of their own, God has predestined and consigned some men to everlasting perdition, just as He has predestined others to eternal salvation, and that the result will be the same in each case, no matter what sort of life they lead. So clearly do these principles strike at the root of morality and religion that only one who is wilfully blind can fail to see that a religious system thus founded can have no claim to the note of sanctity.

Advocates of the Church of England sometimes endeavour to clear her from the stain of Calvinism; but the eleventh and seventeenth

of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Creed are there to show that the Anglican Church has officially adopted the teaching of Calvin on faith and good works.

As regards eminent sanctity and the practice of the Evangelical Counsels, it will be enough to remark that the Protestant Church in general has always looked coldly upon them.

And what is the outcome of Protestantism in the matter of morality, in the practice of religion, and in self-sacrifice and earnestness in works of charity? Perhaps the best way to answer will be to cull a few pages from a recent book,¹ which gives the opinions of various Protestants with regard to the present condition of religion, especially in America.

While the Catholic Church has ever, even at the expense of schism and temporal losses of the greatest magnitude, withstood all encroachments by individuals or governments on the laws of morality, and especially with regard to the maintenance of the sanctity of marriage, divorce has become so common in most Protestant countries that the idea of the indissolubility of the marriage-tie has almost faded out of existence amongst them. Thus, the *New York World* (June, 1903) declared that there had been "in twenty years more than 500,000 divorces in the United States." It was in view of figures like these that the Protestant Episcopal Bishop Burgess of Long Island paid this remarkable tribute: "The Roman Catholic Church has stood like a bulwark against divorce. It has stood for the inviolability of the marriage-tie and the unity of the home. Because of that it is in the world to-day one of the greatest forces for progress and Christianity." Another clergyman, Dr. Mitchell, of the Presbyterian Episcopal Church of Cleveland, was equally strong in his praise of the Catholic Church's "strong and clear protest against the cheap divorce mills which disgrace our American civilization." Another Episcopalian writer, S. M. Mausy, in the *Statesman of America*, declared, "I have high official authority for saying that the ministers and missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church are at this moment doing more good for the cause of virtue and morality throughout the whole continent of America than those of any other religious denomination whatever." The Rev. T. B. Thompson, speaking in the Plymouth Congregational Church, had this to say of the Catholic Church: "We stand in the presence of her history, her majestic worship, her universal ministry, and we confess that God must have moved mightily in all

¹ *Priest and Parson*. By the Rev. J. H. Fogarty. New York, 1908.

this. We think of her Loyolas, her Xaviers, her Fénelons and her Marquettes; we look at her hospitals, orphanages, schools, colleges, monasteries, missions, and we see a Church ministering to the body, mind, and soul of humanity. Her weakness is the common lot of every human organization; her strength is of God."

Another speaker, the Rev. J. H. Ecob, addressing a convention of Unitarians in Boston (May, 1903), having made the following statement, "Protestantism has gone on dwindling and sub-dividing till to-day we have the scandal of Christendom—hundreds of sects, sects of sects, ridiculous sects, even down to the Holy Rollers and the Hook-and-Eye Baptists," quotes with approval the words of the Protestant Episcopal Bishop Whipple of Minnesota: "I believe our divisions are eating all faith out of the American people," and of the Protestant President of Illinois College: "I affirm with awe and trembling that while the Church continues in her present divided condition she is a false witness to her Redeemer and Lord; she fatally misrepresents His principles and His Kingdom to the millions He died to save."

Another preacher, the Rev. Dr. Madison, of the Emanuel Baptist Tabernacle, Baltimore, dwells on the lesson that Protestants should learn from Catholics: "Catholics teach us the lesson of regular attendance upon public worship. . . . Would to God Protestants were as faithful to their Church as Catholics are. . . . The Catholic puts his Church first. . . . Catholics seldom, even in their prosperity, turn against their Church. Would to God our rich Protestants were as faithful. . . . Protestants should learn from Catholics how to give. . . . Catholics are generally poor; but behold their churches. In caring for their children the Catholics teach us a lesson. . . . Here is the source of strength in the Catholic Church. . . . The Catholic Church has been charged with putting too much stress on good works and not enough on faith. Protestantism has swung to the other extreme, and has not put enough on faith. . . . Our religion is too much talk. We have too *many* women's meetings and not enough sisters of charity. . . . The Catholic charities, covering every conceivable case of need and suffering, put Protestants to shame."

Over against all this confusion stands the Catholic Church, which, as the Rev. S. A. Staples of Levington said at the Massachusetts convention of Congregational ministers, "stands like a wall of adamant against private judgment in religion. What has been the result? A united and prosperous Church of tremendous power and influence, holding the same faith, preserving the same forms, singing the same

hymns in all languages throughout the world ; its vast sanctuaries thronged with worshippers, the rich and the poor meeting together to pay their vows of obedience to the God and Father of us all."

But it is time to conclude ; and we shall do so by quoting the words of two non-Catholic English writers. The first is James Anthony Froude, and his words are : " Wisdom, justice, self-denial, nobleness, purity, high-mindedness—these are the qualities before which the free-born races of Europe have been contented to bow ; and in no order of men were such qualities to be found as they were found six hundred years ago in the clergy of the Catholic Church. They called themselves the successors of the Apostles ; they claimed in their Master's name universal spiritual authority ; but they made good their pretensions by the holiness of their lives. . . . Over prince and subject, chieftain and serf, a body of unarmed, defenceless men reigned supreme by the magic of sanctity."

The second is the well-known Unitarian minister Dr. Martineau, who thus concludes an eloquent tribute to the work of the Catholic Church : " To the poor peasant who knows no other dignity it must be a proud thing to feel himself a member of a vast community that spreads from the Andes to the Indus ; that has bid defiance to the vicissitudes of fifteen centuries and adorned itself with the virtues and genius of them all ; that beheld the transition from ancient to modern civilization, and itself forms the connecting link between the old world in Europe and the new ; the missionary of the nations, the associate of history, the patron of art, the vanquisher of the sword."

Thirty-eighth Instruction on the Creed

CATHOLICITY AND APOSTOLICITY

OF the various Christian bodies now existing on earth, with one exception all have appeared at a given date, and that date can be assigned with absolute certainty; but though many attempts have been made to determine a time when the Catholic Church was introduced as something distinct from Christianity, none has succeeded, for the simple reason that the Catholic Church is identical with that one organized body which Christ founded on earth, which He made perennial and indefectible, and which, consequently, can only come to an end when time shall be no more. For, that the Church must be Catholic or universal in duration there cannot be the slightest doubt, unless indeed we are ready to admit that Christ's word can pass away, that His promise can fail.

It is equally certain that He willed His Church to be Catholic or universal in extent, that is to say, world-wide, with no bounds but the ends of the earth. This is clearly implied in the commission entrusted by Him to the governing body of His Church: *Go, teach all nations; preach the Gospel to every creature; you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth.*

And now, remembering that by the Church we must always mean that one society founded by our Lord, with a duly constituted governing body, having at its head one supreme ruler, let us see what precisely we mean when we profess our belief that the Church is Catholic.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who died in the year 386, gives the answer: "Her name is Catholic, because she is spread all over the earth and stretches from end to end; because she universally and uninterruptedly teaches all the doctrines of faith necessary for man to know; because she presses into God's service the whole human race, whether rulers or subjects, learned or unlearned; lastly, because she heals all maladies of soul and body." And speaking of the various bodies of heretics then in existence, he supplies an easy rule for distinguishing between their assemblies and those of the Catholic Church. "For thy security," he writes, "faith has given thee the article: 'and in

one Holy Catholic Church,' so that thou mayest avoid their miserable assemblies and ever abide with the Holy Catholic Church in which thou hast been regenerated. If ever thou shouldst happen to visit a city, do not ask for the Lord's House—simply ask for the Catholic Church ; for such is the special name of that holy body, the mother of us all, and the spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son. . . . The kings of particular nations have bounds set to their dominions ; but the Holy Catholic Church alone extends her illimitable sovereignty over the whole world."

From these and similar passages it is beyond doubt that the Church was called Catholic because, unlike the Jewish religion and unlike all other existing systems of religion, it was not to be local or national, was to be limited by no such consideration, but, as St. Cyril says, " while the kings of particular nations have bounds set to their dominions, the Holy Catholic Church alone extends her illimitable sovereignty over the whole world," and this not merely in a general way, but precisely as founded by our Lord, that is to say, as a great organized body, each member of which is united in active inter-communion with all the rest. Hence it is that the Church of Christ must be non-national, that is to say, must not be the Church of any one nation, but the Church of the whole world ; must be a stranger nowhere, and at home in every land.

A national church may have its members spread over many lands, but it never can be called Catholic, as long as it is national. Thus the Jews had colonists and adherents amongst the Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and in " Mesopotamia and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and Lybia," as well as at Rome and elsewhere ; yet the Jewish religion was essentially a national religion—the aspirations of its members were centred in Palestine, and hence, no matter how widespread it might be, it could never be regarded as catholic or universal.

It is the same with the Greek Church and the Protestant Churches. The members of the latter have spread over many lands ; but they are not, and do not pretend to be, members of a world-wide organization, guided and controlled by a governing body under one supreme head. There are Episcopal Protestants in England and in America and in Australia and in India and in South Africa ; but who will venture to say that they form but one organized body ? Much less will anyone care to assert that there is any real bond of social union between the Protestant bodies in England and those in Germany, Switzerland,

Holland and France ; and much less between the countless sects into which Protestantism has split up in England and America.

Consider the growth of the real Church for a short time. In the beginning it was confined to the Holy Land ; yet who will say that it was fundamentally less catholic in constitution than it is to-day ? A little later St. Peter showed that its membership was not to be confined to the conversion of the Jews : *In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh justice is acceptable to Him* ; and forthwith he proclaimed that the Church is no mere national Church, but is for all nations. St. Paul took the same course and proclaimed that Christianity knew no distinction of nationality : *There is neither Jew nor Greek ; there is neither bond nor free ; there is neither male nor female.*

For a while the followers of Christ were known as Christians, to distinguish them from the Jews ; but later on heretical bodies rose up to disturb the peace of the Church. To distinguish the genuine article from such bodies, the word Catholic was soon adopted and applied to the true Church and her children. Thus, writing in the first decade of the second century, the great martyr-bishop of Antioch, St. Ignatius, in his letter to the people of Smyrna, told them that "where the Catholic Church is, there Christ is" ; and in the same way, about a generation later, the people of Smyrna wrote a letter, giving an account of the martyrdom of their bishop, St. Polycarp, addressing it "to all the parishes of the Holy Catholic Church in every place," that is, to the Christian countries forming part of the one corporate body founded by Christ. Towards the close of the fourth century St. Pacian thus sums up the situation : "Christian is my name, Catholic is my surname ; the former points me out, the latter tells what I am."

On the other hand, St. Augustine well describes the difference between the diffusion of heretics and that of Catholics : "There are heretics everywhere, but not the same heretics everywhere,—there is one sort in Africa, another sort in the East, a third sort in Egypt, and a fourth sort in Mesopotamia ; for they are different in different countries, though all produced by the same mother, pride. The faithful, too, are born of one common mother, the Catholic Church ; but, though dispersed everywhere, are the same everywhere."

A final quotation from the same saint may suitably bring this subject to a close : "As for the Catholic Church, many are the considerations that keep me within her bosom. I am kept by the agreement of peoples and nations ; I am kept by an authority begun with

miracles, nourished with hope, increased with charity, strengthened by antiquity ; I am kept by the succession of pastors from the very chair of the Apostle Peter down to the present occupant ; in fine, I am kept by the very name of the Catholic Church—a name which she alone has advisedly retained possession of amidst so many heresies, so much so that though all these would fain be called Catholics, yet let but a stranger inquire, ‘ Where is the meeting-place of the Catholics ? ’ and not one of them would dare to point out his own place of worship.” Elsewhere he notes how even heretics render unwilling testimony to the Church, which they always call by the name of Catholic, for the simple reason that “ they would not be understood if they did not call her by the name by which the whole world calls her.”

This is as true to-day as it was fifteen hundred years ago, in the days of St. Augustine. There is hardly a cabman in Europe, who, if directed to drive you to the Catholic church, will not understand you to mean the Roman Catholic church, and no other.

Not only do we profess to believe that the Church is One, Holy, and Catholic ; we also declare that it is Apostolic.

That the true Church must preserve and teach the doctrine of the Apostles is obvious, and cannot be called into question. But this is not precisely what is meant when we say that Apostolicity is a note of the true Church ; the use of the note of Apostolicity has always been directed rather to testing whether a particular form of belief was part of divine revelation. Neither does the note of Apostolicity consist in the fact that an individual has obtained valid episcopal consecration, nor in the fact that one so consecrated is in actual occupation of a see that had been occupied by a man who derived his succession from one or other of the Apostles. For there was hardly a single heresy or schism in ancient times that was not headed or supported by validly consecrated bishops. Cases in point are found in abundance in the history of Arius, Nestorius, and Donatus. Episcopal consecration, then, is not sufficient.

In what, then, does the note of Apostolicity consist ? The best way to find the correct answer will undoubtedly be to investigate the sense in which it was used by those three great champions of the Church, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Augustine, who expounded it so fully and wielded it so effectually against the heresies or schisms that existed in their day. What, then, is required, according to these great authorities ?

First of all, they laid down that valid episcopal consecration was a necessary condition towards establishing a claim to the note of

Apostolicity. But it was not enough ; something more was required. And what was that something ? All three are unanimous in laying down that that something consisted in visible communion with an Apostolic See, that is, with a see which can trace its origin back to one or other of the Apostles through an unbroken line of bishops, each being in communion with his predecessor and legitimately succeeding him. In the beginning several such sees existed ; the fact of their possession of legitimate succession from an Apostle was fresh in the memory of man ; and each could be appealed to as a test of the true teaching of the Apostles. Especially was this so in the case of the See of Rome, which not only was Apostolic, but possessed a higher authority—was the leading Apostolic See. On this point our three witnesses are all equally at one.

Thus, St. Augustine says that on such occasions—that is, when it is necessary to discuss the succession of bishops—“ the surest and most effective plan is that of reckoning downwards from St. Peter, to whom our Lord said : *Upon this rock I will build My Church.* For Peter was succeeded by Linus,” and so on down to Anastasius, the then occupant of the See of Rome.

The same declaration is made by him, in a passage quoted in a former instruction. Amongst the many things that keep him in the Catholic Church he includes “ the succession of pastors from the very See of Peter (to whom our Lord committed the feeding of His sheep) down even to the present Bishop.”

Precisely identical is the teaching of Tertullian more than a century and a half earlier. He takes up the following line of argument against contemporary heretics: The true rule of faith has been handed down from the Apostles by the Church ; while the representatives of the Church are the bishops who come down in a direct line from the Apostles, and who could teach nothing but what they received from the Apostles. Hence, should heretics claim descent from the Apostles, “ let them,” he says, “ produce the original records of their churches—let them open the roll of their bishops coming down in legitimate succession from the beginning, so as to show that the predecessor and consecrator of their first bishop was one of the Apostles, or an apostolic man, and not only this, but a man who continued steadfast with the Apostles.”

In the same work he exemplifies this test by appealing to various Apostolic churches, and concludes : “ But since you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of the Apostles themselves). Oh, happy

Church of Rome, on which, along with their blood, the Apostles poured forth all their doctrine."

St. Irenæus, who wrote towards the end of the second century, is equally explicit. Discussing the rule of that faith for which he laid down his life a few years later, he points out that "the Church, which is spread all over the world to the ends of the earth, received this faith from the Apostles and their disciples"; that from the days of the Apostles down to his day the Church could not but teach everywhere the same doctrine, without interruption or change; that in this the true Church is distinguished from sects; and that agreement with the Apostolic Church is proof of truth. And where are we to look for that Church? Here is his answer: "Suppose there should arise a dispute on some important point of doctrine, should we not have recourse to the most ancient churches with which the Apostles held constant intercourse, and thus learn the exact truth of the matter?" But as it would take too long to give lists of the line of bishops in each Apostolic Church, the saint lays it down that for all practical purposes it will be quite sufficient to do this in the case of "the greatest and most ancient of all the churches, that Church known all over the earth, that Church which was founded at Rome by the glorious Apostles Peter and Paul, and whose faith has been transmitted to us through a succession of bishops down to our own day." He concludes by giving a list of the Bishops of Rome, from St. Peter down to the then Bishop, St. Elutherius.

Such, then, is the test of Apostolicity as laid down by these great champions of the Church—communion and agreement in faith with the legitimate occupants of those great Apostolic Churches founded by Apostles, and especially with the Apostolic See of Rome.

That the Roman Catholic Church can point out the list of its supreme pastors, beginning with the present Pope and going back in unbroken line to the days when St. Augustine gave the list from St. Peter down to Anastasius, or when St. Irenæus gave the list down to Elutherius, no serious man will deny. As Lord Macaulay graphically expresses it: "The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin, the august dynasty extends till it is lost in the twilight of fable." And that the teaching of the Catholic Church is consistent throughout the ages, that what she says once she says for ever, even her enemies are forced to admit, if

not expressly, at least tacitly; for the only argument they ever attempt to bring against the unbroken consistency of her teaching is based on two or three doubtful incidents of inconsistency, alleged to have occurred more than a thousand years ago. Nay, they even complain of this very consistency which they denounce as an evil outcome of her "iron rule and uniformity."

On the other hand, an invariable characteristic of heretical and schismatical bodies is that there is no difficulty in determining the day and date when they first made their appearance. While the Catholic Church, "the visible and one Church, the reproduction and succession of herself age after age," stands forward like a living body, exhibiting in herself a continuity of existence in all places and times; while no one seriously holds that the present Catholic Church began at any later period than the times of the Apostles; the date can be assigned of every other body that claims, or has claimed, the name of Christian—Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, Palagians, Greeks, Albigenses, Waldenses, Wyclifites, Lutherans, Calvinists, Protestants, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and the countless offshoots of Protestantism.

As for the conformity of the faith held by the various Protestant bodies with that of the only Apostolic See that has preserved an unbroken existence on earth, all that need be said is to refer to previous instructions, especially that on the Unity of the Church.

Thirty-ninth Instruction on the Creed

THE POPE

WE have now seen that in the Church founded by Christ there was a governing body, and that this governing body was to be one, permanent, perennial and infallible; and we also saw that at its head our Lord placed one who was to guide and rule all the others, and whose office was to last as long as the Church should last.

But not only did our Lord constitute St. Peter supreme head of the Apostolic body which He placed over His Church,—He also endowed him in a very special way with certain gifts to be used for the good of the Church. Of these gifts the most important was that of infallibility; and this gift we now proceed to discuss. And first as regards the conferring of this gift.

Several of the passages in which our Lord, addressing St. Peter, made him supreme head of the Church also convey the promise of the gift of infallibility. As these have been cited on former occasions they need not be repeated in full. It will suffice to recall them briefly.

First of all, as we know, Christ promised to make Peter the foundation of His Church, and hence, unless we are to belie our Lord's promise, Peter was to be the foundation of the whole Church of Christ, of the Church of all ages, of all the Church's members, both pastors and people. And being the Church's foundation, it was his office to support it, impart solidity to it, and form one body with it. Bearing this in mind, who can fail to see that if that foundation were not sound, if Peter or his successors could waver, if they were not to remain at all times strong, firm, unshaken and unshakable in the faith, our Lord's promise would come to naught and the gates of hell would prevail against His Church. How could he be the foundation if he were not sure of not slipping himself?

Again: To the same Peter and his successors Christ gives the keys, the symbol of unlimited power; He gives him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, of that edifice which He will build, of that edifice which He has already indicated, that is to say, His Church, and He

promises that the decisions of Peter will be so secure as to be ratified by Him in heaven.

Again : In that most solemn of all moments, when the Divine Redeemer was just about to set out for the dread scene in the Garden of Gethsemani, a question arose between the Apostles as to which of them was the greater. Our Saviour having settled the question by a lesson on humility, turned to Peter and said to him : *Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have YOU that he may sift YOU as wheat ; but I have prayed for THEE that THY faith fail not ; and THOU, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.*¹ Now, observe : Our Lord foretells that the governing body in His Church was to be assailed, tried, tested, passed through the sieve of tribulation. The faith of all was to be put to the test ; and yet our Saviour does not pray for all, but for one ; He prays that after his fall and conversion Peter may be infallible in all that concerns the faith ; and He commissions that same infallible Peter to confirm in the faith the other members of the governing body of His Church. Not only this, but the commission is given to Peter, not in his individual capacity, but in his official capacity as foundation of the Church of Christ, keeper of the keys of His kingdom and, as we shall see in a moment, Supreme Pastor of His one fold ; and as these offices cannot but be perpetual, and as Peter cannot hope to live for ever in person, we must conclude that the commission to confirm his brethren must be handed down to his successors, who must, like him, be infallible in matters of faith. And as it closely concerns the faith to define what is vice, sin, moral evil, and what is virtue, merit, moral good, it follows that Peter and his successors must be infallible also in the matter of truths bearing on morals.

All this did our Lord promise before His Passion ; and what He promised He actually conferred, ere He ascended into heaven. Shortly before His final departure from earth, having thrice interrogated Peter, and having had from him that triple protestation of love, He conferred on him the power of feeding, that is, of teaching and ruling, His lambs and His sheep, the faithful and their pastors ; in a word, His whole Church. Peter, then, is constituted Supreme and Universal Pastor of the Lord's flock. Now of all these ample powers conferred on Peter and his successors, the first in rank is that of teaching, establishing, preserving and transmitting the doctrine of our Lord. And if Peter and his successors possess the power and,

¹ Luke xxii. 31.

with the power, the duty of teaching the doctrine of Christ to all without exception, it is clear, on the other hand, that on all without exception is imposed the duty of accepting the teaching of Peter and his successors, if they wish to belong to the Church and the fold of Christ. Now, suppose for one moment that Peter and his successors could err in matters of faith and impose error in place of truth—and all this in the name and by the authority of Christ—what would be the result? Either all obey, as Christ would have them, and thus all fall into error simply because they act on the command of Him who imposes obedience to Peter and his successors; or all do not obey, and thus we have the sheep rebelling against the shepherd, the disciples against the master, children against their father, subjects against their ruler; and thus the Church's foundation fails, and the edifice itself crumbles into ruin.

Subsequent ages accepted and acted on the infallibility of Peter's successors in the See of Rome. They regarded the See of Rome as the mother and the mistress of all sees, the Apostolic See, the See forming the invincible bond of unity, the See in which is found the complete and true solidity of the Christian religion, the See which is so supreme that it can be judged by no other see, the See that no one can abandon without abandoning the Church, the See outside of which no Christian can eat the paschal lamb or avoid being submerged by the waters of the deluge, the See which is always free from the stain of error, the See to which all doubts concerning matters of faith must be submitted and whose decision puts an end to all discussion, the See, in fine, as the great St. Irenæus taught, to which all other Churches were bound to be united in faith because of her greater principality. The readiest way of ascertaining whether a particular doctrine was erroneous was to show that it had never been taught by the See of Rome.

A few well-known facts will make it clear that the Popes have always acted on the consciousness of this infallibility. Thus, when the Council of Ephesus was summoned to condemn the heresy of Nestorius, the instruction given by Pope Celestine the First to his legates was simply this: "Should opinion be divided, do not forget that you are present, not to discuss, but to decide."

Again: Six hundred bishops are assembled at Chalcedon to deal with the heresy of Eutyches, when a message is read from Pope Leo I. "It is a matter for belief, not a question for discussion; for my letter to Flavian has already fully and clearly decided all that is of faith regarding the mystery of the Incarnation." And all these six

hundred bishops with one voice exclaimed : “ Peter has spoken by the mouth of Leo—Peter lives always in his See.”

At the Third Council of Constantinople a letter was read from Pope Agatho to the effect that “ the Apostolic See has never turned aside from the path of truth ; the whole Church and all the general councils have constantly embraced its teaching as that of the Prince of the Apostles.”

Other councils expressly recognized the doctrine of Papal infallibility, notably the Council of Florence. But it was only in 1870 that it was solemnly defined as an article of faith, when the Vatican Council proclaimed that when discharging his office, “ as pastor and doctor of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, the Pope defines that a doctrine on faith and morals is to be held by all the people, he enjoys, by the divine assistance promised to him in the person of St. Peter, that infallibility which it was our Divine Redeemer’s will that His Church should enjoy in defining doctrines of faith and morals.” On this decree, a few observations will be useful.

The doctrine has been defined as an article of faith by a general council of the Church, and hence cannot be questioned without forfeiture of the name of Catholic.

The infallibility of the Pope is due simply and solely to the promise which Christ made to St. Peter and his successors.

Is the Pontiff to be regarded as infallible in all things? No ; but only in questions of faith or morals. Infallibility is limited by the same boundaries as revelation.

And is he always infallible in questions of faith or morals? No ; but only when he speaks or teaches *ex-cathedra*.

And what is the meaning of *ex-cathedra*? It means, in the formal exercise of his office, that is to say, when he discharges the part of pastor and teacher entrusted to him by our Lord—not merely pastor and teacher of one diocese or country or people, but when he exercises the office of universal pastor and teacher of all Christians.

Of all Christians, that is, of all those who have been baptized—for by baptism each one becomes subject as a matter of right to the Roman Pontiff, Christ’s Vicar on earth.

And how are we to know when a certain pronouncement of the Pope is infallible? When he makes it clear beyond all reasonable doubt that he intends to define—that is, to pronounce—a binding, absolute, irrevocable decision which is to become one of the dogmatic, immutable truths of faith.

And how are we to know that such is his intention? When he

says so himself and declares it in explicit, formal, indubitable terms—not when others say he said it or conclude that such was his intention. As long as there remains any reasonable doubt as to the Pope's intention, his utterance cannot be regarded as infallible.

Is every sentence in an infallible pronouncement to be regarded as infallible? No; but simply and solely the particular point which it is clear he intends to define and which he puts forward in clear and precise terms as one of the doctrines revealed by God. Hence the reasons that have led to the definition, the object the Pope has in view in proclaiming it, and his answers to the difficulties that may be or have been raised against it, are outside the sphere of infallibility.

These various points, for instance, will be found verified in the well-known declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. The doctrine had been commonly held in the Church, and the proclamation simply proposed it to the belief of all the faithful, in a clear and precise formula. Here are the words in which this was done by Pius IX.: "By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own authority, We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that in the first instant of her Immaculate Conception the Blessed Virgin Mary, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of Mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God and is therefore to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all the faithful." In these words there can be no doubt as to the Pope's intention, which was to "declare, pronounce, define"; neither can there be any doubt as to what it is that he intends to define.

Furthermore, once the Pope has solemnly defined that a particular doctrine is one of the revealed truths, his definition must at once be accepted, nor can it ever be changed: it is irrevocable.

From all that has been said thus far, regarding the limits of Papal infallibility, it will be clear that the Pope is not to be considered infallible in his individual capacity. In his individual capacity, like every other man, he may reason, discuss, argue, express his views and opinions on points connected with faith and morals; but such views, opinions, conversations and discussions are not to be regarded as infallible. Neither are the books which he may publish as a writer, philosopher or theologian, such as those of St. Leo, St. Gregory, John XXII., or Benedict XIV. Neither are the discourses he may deliver on solemn occasions, such as addresses to groups of pilgrims,

to an assembly of bishops or cardinals. His words on such occasions may be authoritative, and will always be worthy of the deepest respect ; but they are not infallible. Neither are the letters and briefs which he addresses from time to time to individual bishops, or groups of bishops, even on matters connected with faith and morals. Such documents must be accorded respect and obedience, but it would be an error to look on them as infallible. In like manner the decrees and decisions of the Roman Congregations, even though published with the approbation of the Pope, are not infallible, for the simple reason that on such occasions the Pope does not exercise his authority in its supreme degree as infallible teacher of the Universal Church. Thus, when a book is put on the *Index*, the faithful are bound in conscience to obey and not to read that book ; but the decision that leads to its being put on the *Index* is not a definition and is not infallible in the sense of the Vatican Council.

Neither are we to regard as definitions the Allocutions, Encyclicals, and similar pronouncements, in which the Pope, addressing the whole Church, condemns certain doctrines as erroneous, rash, pernicious, scandalous, bordering on heresy. These and similar acts in matters of faith and morals do indeed bind in conscience, and we are bound, not only to obey, but to assent to what he teaches and establishes. The truth always and ever imposes the obligation of assent ; and in such cases as those mentioned just now the truth is set forth by the competent supreme authority. Hence if I refuse to yield the assent of my mind I become *guilty of sin*,—I err, I am rash, I am guilty of holding scandalous, pernicious doctrines—doctrines bordering on heresy ; but I am not a *heretic*, I am not guilty of heresy, because the papal acts in question are not definitions in the sense of the Vatican Council.

In the same way the Pope may make laws for the whole Church, and while these laws ought to be exempt from all error, we are not called upon to believe that they are the best of all possible laws, that they are the most opportune at the moment, or that they are exactly what is required under existing circumstances.

The situation is thus summed up in a joint pastoral issued by the Swiss bishops and approved by Pius IX. : The Pope is not infallible as a man, nor as a writer, nor as priest, nor as bishop, nor as temporal sovereign, nor as judge, nor as legislator. He is neither infallible nor impeccable in his life, in his conduct, in his political views, in his relations towards rulers, and not even in the government of the Church ; but simply and solely when, as supreme teacher of the Church,

he pronounces a sentence in matters of faith and morals, to be held by all the faithful.

In a former instruction it was shown that the Church is infallible ; it is also admitted that a general council is infallible ; and we have seen just now that the Pope is infallible. Are there, then, three different infallible authorities ? No ; there is but one infallibility—for the gift of infallibility is imparted to the Church and to the council by its visible head, just as light and heat exist on the earth because the earth received both from the sun ; but they exist in the sun as in their source. Infallibility is in the Church because, through Peter, the successor of Peter has received it from Christ and diffuses it over the Church, just as the sun diffuses his rays over the earth. From Christ it descends on the Pontiff, and from him it irradiates over pastors and flock, because he is Christ's Vicar, the foundation of the Church, the keeper of heaven's keys, the confirmer of his brethren, the pastor of Christ's entire flock.

Fortieth Instruction on the Creed

CHURCH AUTHORITY AND HIERARCHY

It will be clear from previous instructions that in the Church there are two very distinct parts ; for there are some who rule and some who obey, some who teach and some who are taught—the latter, who form what is known as the *Church Taught*, being composed of all the faithful ; while the former, which is known as the *Teaching Church*, is composed of the Hierarchy, with the Roman Pontiff at their head.

As regards the powers of the Pope, we have already seen that he is the successor of St. Peter, who established his see at Rome and died there ; that he is the visible head of the Church ; that he is Christ's Vicar ; and that he represents Him on earth and acts in His stead in the government of the Church.

We have also seen that because of the promise of Jesus Christ, and the unfailing assistance of the Holy Ghost, the Pope is infallible when, as Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the whole Church.

Finally, we considered the conditions under which the Pope is infallible ; and we saw that one who refuses to accept, or even entertains doubts as to the solemn definitions of the Pope, sins against the faith ; and should he remain obstinate in his refusal, he ceases to be a Catholic and becomes a heretic.

Very rarely indeed is the Pope called on to exercise the gift of infallibility ; but there is one office which he must ceaselessly discharge, and that is the office of ruler, which pertains to him as Supreme Pastor and keeper of the keys of the Kingdom of Christ on earth. This office he derives from no human authority but from God Himself. It was by divine institution that St. Peter was made not merely bishop of a particular see, but Bishop of bishops, Pastor of pastors, Chief of chiefs, Universal Primate, Supreme Governor, the Centre of Unity, the Head of the whole Church. And in precisely the same way his successor, the Bishop of Rome, is not merely the bishop of a particular see, but is Bishop of bishops, Pastor of pastors, Chief of chiefs, Universal

Governor, Centre of Unity, and Head of all the Church. In the person of St. Peter, therefore, the Roman Pontiff has received from Jesus Christ full power and authority to feed, rule and govern the universal Church.

And now, in addition to infallibility, what exactly are the powers and prerogatives possessed by the Pope in virtue of his position as Supreme Pastor and key-bearer ?

In a general way it is his right no less than his duty to be the hand directing all, the eye observing all, the watchman ever on the alert to notice every movement of that great body whose members are spread over the whole world. And not only has he the right of inspection and direction,—he also possesses direct, immediate, absolute, universal jurisdiction over every member of the whole Church. So much in general. But to descend to particulars :

(1) It pertains to the Pope to convoke general councils, or permit them to be convoked, to preside thereat either personally or through his legates, to dissolve or prorogue them, and to confirm or annul their decisions either wholly or in part. A general council is never absolutely necessary, inasmuch as the Pope himself is capable of teaching with infallible authority what men are bound to believe, and of laying down practical directions for men to follow ; and the council can do no more. General councils, then, are not of frequent occurrence ; in fact, during the whole existence of the Church only nineteen general councils have been held. It is only when some great evil has to be coped with, or when some point has to be settled that calls for the combined action of the whole episcopate, that general councils have met. But the important thing to remember is that a council cannot be regarded as general if it has not the Papal ratification, nor have its acts any binding force till they have received Papal confirmation.

(2) To the Pope alone pertains the right to rule the Church scattered over the whole world—to create dioceses, settle their extent, appoint bishops over them, confer jurisdiction on the bishops thus appointed, as well as to increase, lessen, or withdraw that jurisdiction, should he deem it necessary.

(3) It pertains to the Pope alone to issue laws and ordinances binding the whole Christian world, to dispense from these laws when necessary, to receive appeals and to pronounce final decisions, Not only is the Pope the Bishop of Rome ; he is also Bishop of all the bishops of the world—the father, teacher, judge of all the faithful. When he defines a truth to be an article of faith, his

definition is infallible and must be received with undoubting faith. When he issues instructions, makes new laws, reforms old laws, when, in a word, he acts as Christ's Vicar on earth, his words must be received with unhesitating respect, submission, obedience. If we wish to be saved, we must be ever in perfect union with the Pope and obedient to his authority.

But though the Pope is supreme, he is not alone in the government of the Church. If he is successor of St. Peter, the Episcopal body is successor of the College of the Apostles. But while the Pope is successor of St. Peter in the fullest sense of the word, while his powers and prerogatives are equal to those of St. Peter, there is a wide difference between the individual bishop and one of the Apostles. The authority of the members of the Apostolic College was world-wide, just as was the Commission given them by Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to every creature, to all nations: *I am appointed*, says St. Paul, *a preacher, an Apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles*.¹ As a rule, then, the Apostles did not confine their ministrations to any see. They went over various parts of the world, establishing episcopal sees, appointing bishops, and instructing and directing such bishops how to rule the diocese assigned them. It is abundantly clear from the letters of St. Paul that the bishops appointed by him were subordinate, were limited in power, were confined to a definite territory, and were under the guidance and supervision of the Apostles. Moreover, while the individual Apostle was infallible, the same cannot be said of the individual bishop; for bishops have erred over and over again—they have even been founders or adherents of many a schism or heresy.

Clearly, then, the individual bishop is not the successor of any of the Apostles in the full and adequate sense of the word; for the individual bishop does not possess all the powers and prerogatives of the Apostles. In what sense, then, are the bishops the successors of the Apostles? In this sense: As we know, the Apostles ordained bishops, assigned to them a particular locality, carefully instructed them in their duties, gave them authority to ordain others who would assist and succeed to themselves, and finally entrusted the deposit of faith to them, with definite directions to hand it down to prudent men who in turn should do likewise. Hence it will be seen that the bishops are the representatives of the Apostles in the work of teaching and ruling the Church; and though individually their powers are not as ample as those of the Apostles, yet they are the successors of the Apostles

¹ 2 Tim i. 2.

in this, that they were appointed by the Apostles to carry on their work, to preserve the deposit of faith, and in their corporate capacity to teach all nations.

In their corporate capacity, then, as successors of the Apostolic College, our Lord's promise to be with them always to the end of the world applies to the Episcopal body; but on one condition—that they be in union with the Supreme Head of the Church. In union with him they constitute the teaching Church, and hence enjoy the prerogative of infallibility and the various other powers which the Supreme Pastor entrusts to his assistants. But, once they act independent of the Supreme Head, once they ignore his authority, they are mere fallible men, as history only too well proves.

Bearing this in mind, then, there will be no difficulty in seeing that it was neither to kings, nor emperors, nor governments, nor parliaments, nor any civil power or authority whatever, but simply and solely to the Apostolic College and its lawful successor, the Episcopal body, under the leadership of the successors of St. Peter, that our Lord said : *As My Father hath sent Me, so do I send you. Go, then, and teach all nations . . . Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.* And in the same way it was neither kings, nor emperors, nor governments, nor parliaments, nor any civil power or authority whatever, but *bishops alone whom the Holy Ghost has placed to rule the Church of God.* The Pope and the Episcopal body, therefore, and they alone, possess authority to govern the Church—all outside interference is nothing short of usurpation, and in direct violation of the rights of God.

To the bishop, then, in union with the Pope, belongs the power of ruling not merely a parish, but the whole diocese entrusted to his care.

To the bishop, too, it pertains to ordain priests, assign them their duties, send them to such and such a parish, and curtail or increase their powers.

To the bishop it pertains to expound the faith within the limits of his diocese, to teach it either directly or through the agency of others deputed to condense it in the form of a catechism, intended to become the official diocesan teaching.

To him also it pertains to publish Papal constitutions and decrees concerning doctrine, discipline and divine worship; to condemn within his own diocese all erroneous opinions, and to prohibit the reading of books dangerous to faith and morals.

In addition to all this, the bishop has the right to lay down laws

and regulations affecting his own diocese ; to control his priests and to regulate their jurisdiction ; and to grant certain dispensations, according to the necessity of the case, and the extent of the powers conferred on him by the Pope.

Next comes the priest, whose office it is to help the bishop. Though his jurisdiction is limited and derived from that of the bishop, he yet has real jurisdiction over that part of the Lord's flock which the bishop entrusts to his care.

It is his office to instruct his flock, to expound the Gospel, to correct abuses, to single out perverse teaching, to condemn vice, and in a general way to guard his fold against the lion that ceaselessly roams around, seeking whom he may devour. It is also his duty to promote devotions, to direct confraternities, to see after the due observance of public worship, and to confer the sacraments.

As a considerable section of those outside the Catholic Church maintain that bishops were not of Apostolic origin, and that there is no real difference between bishop and priest, it may be useful to refer to the point before concluding this instruction.

The New Testament several times alludes to bishops and priests ; and any doubt that might remain as to the real difference between the two is removed by the celebrated letters of the great martyr-bishop of Antioch, who laid down his life for the faith about the year 110. He was one of the most prominent figures of the age. He had had intimate relations with some of the Apostles. And there can be no doubt that he was fully qualified to know what exactly was the correct teaching on any point of Catholic doctrine. Here then is what he says in those letters of his which he wrote to the Christian communities along his route, when "in bonds for the sake of the common name and hope" he was led "from Syria to Rome, by land and by sea, by night and by day," consumed with the burning thirst of martyrdom, and conscious only of the presence of "the living water murmuring within him and whispering to him 'Come to the Father.'"

"If," he writes, "we are to receive everyone whom the Master of the House sendeth to govern His own household, as we should receive Him that sent him, clearly we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself." In the same way he lays it down that he who obeys his bishop obeys "not him but the Father of Jesus Christ the Bishop of all." Again he writes : "Give heed to your bishop that God may give heed to you," and "follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father." While elsewhere he writes : "As the Lord

did nothing without the Father, so neither do you do anything without the bishop and the priests." And in an exhortation to unity addressed to the Christians of Philadelphia he urges them to be careful to "observe one Eucharist"; for this reason, that "there is but one flesh of Jesus Christ, and but one chalice for the unity of His blood; and there is but one altar, as there is but one bishop together with his priests and deacons."

The Church, then, is the means established by Christ on earth to continue His mission and bring His teaching within reach of mankind. And how, it may be asked in conclusion, does the Church proclaim her doctrine and exercise her teaching power? In ordinary practice, by preaching: *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. But how shall they call on Him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe Him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher?*¹ A preacher then is necessary. And where as a rule are we to look for the preacher? In the fullest sense of the word, the bishops are the Church's ordinary recognized preachers. But in this bishops have co-operators, helpers, assistants in the persons of duly ordained priests, who by ordination have been made capable of becoming the bearers of grace and truth, and who furthermore have been called by authoritative command to the exercise of the ordinary exposition of Christian doctrine. They have not, however, equal rights with the bishop; they are the subordinate witnesses to the truth, being sent by him and subordinate to him. Much less are they judges in matters of faith—they share in the teaching office, but they do not possess the whole teaching authority. Yet they are living organs of the Church, the official executors of the Church's teaching body, the Church's heralds, messengers, envoys. Hence they are real teachers of supernatural truth, and share in the bishop's doctrinal dignity and office.

They are not infallible; but in their union with the teaching Church, in the surveillance and guidance exercised over them by the infallible Church itself, the faithful possess a safe guarantee that through these preachers they receive Christ's infallible teaching. How simply and how securely our Lord's plan works out! Each duly appointed Catholic priest is able to come before his flock and say: "The word of God which I announce to you I have been qualified to announce by such a Catholic bishop, who was consecrated by another Catholic bishop, and so on in a series reaching to the

¹ Rom. x. 14.

Apostles themselves ; and I am authorized to preach to you by such a prelate who received authority for this purpose from the successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See of Rome." Wherever a Catholic is found he is subject to his pastor in matters of religion ; that pastor is subject to his bishop ; and that bishop must acknowledge the supremacy of the successor of St. Peter in matters of faith, morality and spiritual jurisdiction. In every case of error or insubordination—and as long as there is human frailty on earth such cases must occur—there are ecclesiastical laws, and ecclesiastical tribunals, and ecclesiastical judges to correct and put an end to the evil, and thus secure to the faithful the possession of that pure, undefiled doctrine which Christ long ago committed to the custody of His infallible Church.

CHAPTER XII

THE NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED—*Continued*

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

23.—Peculiar importance of this truth.

WRITING to the faithful on the mysteries of faith, St. John the Evangelist sets forth the reason why he instructs them in these truths : *That you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*¹ Now, this fellowship is the Communion of Saints, of which mention is made in this article. And, would to God that in explaining this truth the pastors of the Church would imitate the zeal of St. Paul and the other Apostles. For it is not only a development, so to say, of the preceding article, and a truth productive of abundant fruit, but it also serves as a guide to the use to be made of the mysteries contained in the Creed ; for our great end in studying and examining all these myteries is simply to render ourselves worthy of being admitted to the blessed and glorious fellowship of the saints, and, being admitted, steadily to persevere therein : *With great joy, giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light.*²

24.—Unity of spirit implies a community of spiritual blessings.

In the first place, then, the faithful are to be taught that this part of the article is to some extent a development of the preceding article regarding the one, holy, Catholic Church. The unity of spirit by which the Church is governed implies that whatever has been conferred on her is held in common.

Thus the fruit of all the Sacraments is common to all the faithful ; for, by these Sacraments, and especially by Baptism which is, so to say, the door by which men enter the Church—the faithful are united and attached to Jesus Christ, as by so many sacred bonds.

That by the Communion of Saints we are to understand a

¹ 1 John i. 3.

² Col. i. 12.

communion of Sacraments, the Fathers of the Council of Nice have made clear in these words of the Creed : " I confess one Baptism."

After baptism come the other Sacraments, and especially the Eucharist ; for, though the word communion is applicable to each of the Sacraments, since each of them unites us to God and makes us partakers of Him whose grace we receive, yet it is specially applicable to the Eucharist, which actually produces this communion.

25.—In the Church there is a participation of merits.

There is also in the Church another species of communion to be considered. Every pious and holy act done by one pertains to all, and is profitable to all by virtue of that charity which *seeketh not her own*.¹ This is the teaching of St. Ambrose, who, explaining that passage of the Psalms : *I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee*,² remarks : " Just as we say that a member is a sharer in all the goods of the body, so are we united to all that fear God." This is why our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us in the *Our Father* to say "*our bread*," not "*my bread*," and so on with the other petitions are equally general, not conferred on ourselves alone, but directed to the common interest and well-being of all.

This community of goods is frequently illustrated in Holy Writ by a very apt comparison derived from the members of the human body. In the body there are many members ; and yet they make but one body in which each has its own special function to perform, different from that of the rest. Moreover, the various members do not possess the same dignity, nor are the functions they discharge equally useful and honourable ; and none of them looks to its own exclusive advantage, but to the well-being and advantage of the whole body. On the other hand, they are all so closely united and so well organised, that if one is in pain, the others likewise suffer through affinity and sympathy of nature ; while, on the contrary, if one is healthy, the sense of well-being is shared by all.

A like state of things may be found verified in the Church. Though in the Church there are various members, that is, various nations, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, yet as soon as they receive baptism they make but one body, of which Christ is Head.

To each member of the Church is assigned his own peculiar office—some are appointed apostles, and others teachers, but all are established for the good of the whole body. And hence to

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

² Ps. cxviii. 63.

some it belongs to rule and teach, and to others to be subject and obey.

26.—The wicked in relation to this participation. They alone who lead a Christian life in charity and are just and dear to God, enjoy the many and precious gifts and graces bestowed by God.

As for the dead members, that is, the slaves of sin, who are cut off from the grace of God, they are not deprived of these advantages to such an extent as to cease to be members of this body: yet being but dead members, they do not share in the spiritual fruit which is communicated to the just and pious. Still they are in the Church, and are consequently assisted in recovering lost grace and life by those who live in the spirit, and they enjoy certain benefits of which those are undoubtedly deprived who are altogether outside the Church.

27.—Other graces and blessings. Not only are those gifts common which justify and endear men to God, but also “graces gratuitously given,” such as knowledge, prophecy, the gift of tongues and miracles, and others of the same sort—all of which are granted even to bad men, not indeed for their own, but for the general good and edification of the Church. Thus the gift of healing is given, not for the sake of him who heals, but for the sake of him that is healed.

In a word the truly Christian man possesses nothing which he should not regard as common to himself and to all others; and hence he ought always be prepared and ready to relieve the misery of the needy. He who, endowed with such goods, sees his brother in want and neglects to help him, is clearly convicted of not having the love of God within him.

It is, then, sufficiently clear that they who belong to this communion already enjoy a certain degree of happiness, and can truly say: *How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord*;¹ and: *Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord*.²

¹ Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3.

² Ibid. 5.

THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

THE NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED—*Continued*

I. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Q. What are we taught by these words of the Ninth Article: "The Communion of Saints."?

A. In the words "The Communion of Saints," the Ninth Article of the Creed teaches us that the Church's spiritual goods, both internal and external, are common to all her members because of the intimate union that exists between them.

Q. Which are the internal goods that are common in the Church?

A. The internal goods that are common in the Church are: the graces received through the Sacraments; faith, hope and charity; the infinite merits of Jesus Christ; the superabundant merits of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints; and the fruit of all the good works done in the same Church.

Q. Which are the external goods that are common in the Church?

A. The external goods that are common in the Church are: the Sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, public prayers, religious functions, and all the other outward practices that unite the faithful.

Q. Do all the children of the Church share in this communion of goods?

A. All Christians who are in the grace of God share in the communion of internal goods; while those who are in mortal sin do not participate in these goods.

Q. Why do not those who are in mortal sin participate in these goods?

A. Because that which unites the faithful with God, and with Jesus Christ as His living members, rendering them capable of performing meritorious works for life eternal, is the grace of God which is the supernatural life of the soul; and hence as those who are in mortal sin are without the grace of God, they are excluded from perfect communion in spiritual goods, nor can they accomplish works meritorious towards life eternal.

Q. Do Christians then, who are in mortal sin derive no advantage from the internal and spiritual goods of the Church?

A. Christians who are in mortal sin still continue to derive some advantage from the internal and spiritual goods of the Church, in as much as they still preserve the Christian character which is indelible, and the virtue of faith which is the basis of justification. They are aided, too, by the prayers and good works of the faithful towards obtaining the grace of conversion to God.

Q. Can those in mortal sin participate in the external goods of the Church?

A. Those in mortal sin can participate in the external goods of

the Church, unless indeed they are cut off from the Church by excommunication.

Q. Why are the members of this communion, taken together, called saints ?

A. The members of this communion are called saints because all are called to sanctity and have been sanctified by baptism, and because many of them have really attained perfect sanctity.

Q. Does the Communion of Saints

extend also to heaven and purgatory ?

A. Yes, the Communion of Saints also extends to heaven and purgatory, because charity unites the three Churches—the Triumphant, the Suffering and the Militant ; the saints pray God both for us and for the souls in purgatory ; while we on our part give honour and glory to the saints, and are able to relieve the suffering souls in purgatory by applying in their behalf Masses, alms, indulgences and other good works.

II THOSE OUTSIDE THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Q. Who are they who do not belong to the Communion of Saints ?

A. Those who are damned do not belong to the Communion of Saints in the other life ; and in this life those who belong neither to the body nor to the soul of the Church, that is, those who are in mortal sin, and who are outside the true Church.

Q. Who are they who are outside the true Church ?

A. Outside the true Church are : Infidels, Jews, heretics, apostates, schismatics, and the excommunicated.

Q. Who are infidels ?

A. Infidels are those who have not been baptized and do not believe in Jesus Christ, because they either believe in and worship false gods as idolators do, or though admitting one true God, they do not believe in the [Messiah, neither as already come in the Person of Jesus Christ, nor as to come ; for instance, Mohammedans and the like.

Q. Who are the Jews ?

A. The Jews are those who profess the Law of Moses ; have not

received baptism ; and do not believe in Jesus Christ.

Q. Who are heretics ?

A. Heretics are those of the baptized who obstinately refuse to believe some truth revealed by God and taught as an article of faith by the Catholic Church ; for example, the Arians, the Nestorians and the various sects of Protestants.

Q. Who are apostates ?

A. Apostates are those who abjure, or by some external act deny, the Catholic faith which they previously professed.

Q. Who are schismatics ?

A. Schismatics are those Christians who, while not explicitly denying any dogma, yet voluntarily separate themselves from the Church of Jesus Christ, that is, from their lawful pastors.

Q. Who are the excommunicated ?

A. The excommunicated are those who, because of grievous transgressions, are struck with excommunication by the Pope or their Bishop, and consequently are cut off as unworthy from the body

of the Church, which, however, hopes for and desires their conversion.

Q. Should excommunication be dreaded ?

A. Excommunication should be greatly dreaded, because it is the severest and most terrible punishment the Church can inflict upon her rebellious and obstinate children.

Q. Of what goods are the excommunicated deprived ?

A. The excommunicated are de-

prived of public prayers, of the Sacraments, of indulgences and of Christian burial.

Q. Can we in any way help the excommunicated ?

A. We can in some way help the excommunicated and all others who are outside the true Church, by salutary advice, by prayers and good works, begging God in His mercy to grant them the grace of being converted to the faith and of entering into the Communion of Saints.

Forty-first Instruction on the Creed

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

THE ninth article of the Creed is divided into two closely connected parts. The first relates to the Catholic Church, of which we have spoken at sufficient length in the foregoing instructions; while the second, which is now to occupy our attention, concerns the Communion of Saints—a doctrine that naturally follows from the truths already set forth regarding the Church. The fact that the Church is a body composed of many members under a single head necessarily implies that between these members there is intercommunion, a mutual exchange of goods. Now, the Church, as we have seen, is in the strict sense of the word the congregation of all the faithful still living on earth; while in a wider sense it means the congregation of all the faithful, including those who have died in the grace of God. Under both aspects there exists that Communion of Saints which we confess in the present article.

I. And first as regards the communion existing between the faithful still living on earth: you will readily understand that it is not a mere question of that exterior communion which is established between them by the profession of the same faith, participation in the same sacraments, subordination to the same legitimate pastors—for this species of communion only affects the visible body of the Church; but we here speak of an interior communion, in virtue of which each one of the faithful participates in all the spiritual gifts and blessings that belong to the Church. These gifts and blessings consist in the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, poured out over the whole body; in the fruit of the Sacraments, of the most Holy Sacrifice of the altar, of the indulgences, prayers, virtues, merits and good works of our brethren in the Church—in a word, in every grace and blessing, public and private.

In this article, then, we profess that the immense treasure of gifts existing in the Church redounds to the advantage of the whole body of the faithful; for faith, hope and charity, which unite us, establish between us a holy intercommunication, putting into

culatation for the benefit of all the Church's members this immense treasure of gifts, graces, truths, and spiritual goods.

St. Paul facilitates our understanding of the point by a comparison which he makes between this communion and that which exists between the limbs and organs of the human body. The organs of the body are many; their functions and operations are different—some being nobler than the others. Thus the eye is given us to enable us to see, the ear to hear, the tongue to speak, and so on. Yet between these various organs there is a certain sympathy making all the members participate in the particular advantages possessed by each one of them. Thus the eye alone sees; yet it sees not merely for its own advantage but for that of the whole body; the hand does not act for its own advantage alone, but for that of the whole body; and so on with the various other limbs and organs and members of the body. All are animated by the same spirit; they are not only for themselves, but for the others as well: all mutually help and assist each other. If one of the members should happen to be in pain or suffering, the others suffer too; if one of the members is in good condition the others share in its well-being; so that every blessing is shared by all, and every ill is likewise common through sympathy.

The same thing happens in the mystic body of the Church. Her members are different; different, too, are her ministrations, her states, her employments, her operations. Yet all that takes place redounds to the profit of each one: *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit.*¹ Each one shares in the fruit of the labours, the merits, and the good works of all the others, since all are members of the same body, animated by the same spirit, that is, the Holy Ghost who is received in baptism and in the other Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist which is the most striking image of this society and this union of the faithful; all are united to the same Head, that is, Jesus Christ our Saviour, and consequently all participate in the spiritual life which that Head communicates to the body, His Church.

Such, then, is the meaning of that communion which exists between Christians here on earth; and, oh! how great a grace do we not here possess, since through it we become associated in the merits of all good Christians, wherever they may be found, no matter how distant, or how scattered over the globe! They may know nothing of us, and we may know nothing of them; yet, in virtue of this marvellous communion, they participate in the good that we do

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 7.

and we participate in the good that they do. Thanks to this communion, all the good that is done daily in the whole Church becomes ours in part ; all the sacraments that are administered, all the sacrifices that are offered, all the prayers that are addressed to heaven, all the alms that are dispensed on earth, all the acts of humility, charity, patience, love of God and one's neighbour, that are daily done by the just—all amount to riches in which we have a share and which makes up for our own poverty and misery. When we reflect on all these advantages, can we ever thank God enough for having made us members of His Church, and thus rendered us capable of participating in so immense a treasure ? *I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee, and that keep Thy commandments.*¹

II. Note the words, *thus rendered us capable* ; for this doctrine, which is most true in general, has its limitations and reservations. All the faithful do not share indiscriminately in the spiritual goods of the Church ; nor do all those who actually participate therein do so equally or in the same degree.

I. In the first place, all the faithful do not participate therein, but those alone in whose hearts justice, charity, and sanctifying grace are found to reign. And hence it is that this communion is called the *Communion of Saints*, not only because all the faithful are called to sanctity, but also because those alone who are saints, that is, those who are united to God by charity, have a part therein.

That infidels, heretics, schismatics, and the excommunicated are excluded from participation in the goods and merits that are in circulation in the Church there can be no doubt, since they are really separated from the Church's body. Sinners, though materially united to it, are also excluded. And the reason will be clear if we recall St. Paul's comparison. For a particular limb or organ to be an actual sharer in the well-being of the body, it is by no means enough that it be united thereto—it must also itself be living. Thus a hand, a foot, an arm, stricken by paralysis, remain united to the body, but receive no vital influence from it, because they are deprived of feeling, movement, and all other advantages enjoyed by limbs and organs in a normal state.

In the same way, sinners are indeed outwardly united to the body of the Church, but merely as dead members ; and hence they can have no share in the divine spirit that vivifies the Church.

This is precisely what Jesus Christ teaches in the Gospel when He

¹ Ps. cxviii. 23.

compares Himself to a vine of which we form the branches: *I am the vine ; you are the branches.*¹ And as dead branches, or branches separated from the vine, can receive no vigour, nourishment, or life from it, so unless we are united to Jesus Christ by interior charity, we can produce no fruit meritorious towards eternal life. Now if we cannot merit for ourselves while in that state, how can we participate in the merits of others? No, as long as we preserve in our hearts the poison that holds our soul in a state of death, we can derive no profit from the merits of our neighbour.

At the same time it cannot be denied that it will always be an advantage for the sinner to remain united to the body of the Church. For a member that is still attached to the body can always revive, once the cause that inflicts death on it disappears, and can recover its normal functions. Thus the sinner, being still united to the Church, by the profession of the true faith, by the right which he still retains to the reception of the sacraments, by his presence at religious ceremonies, at Mass, instructions and prayers, derives from this union powerful helps, both interior and exterior, towards the recovery of the spiritual life he has lost.

Still, as long as he remains in the state of spiritual death he has no part in the Communion of Saints, beyond the prayers and sacrifices which the Church offers for him to God.

This single reflection, apart altogether from many other grave reasons, such as the danger of eternal damnation, to which such a one is exposed, should induce the sinner to cleanse his soul by a good confession so as to have a share in that treasure of merits which is accumulated in the Church.

2. In the second place, I pointed out that the just do not participate equally or in the same degree. The participation is precisely in proportion to the extent of each one's dispositions, just as the members of the body participate more or less abundantly in the life of the body according as their health is more or less perfect. He, then, who has more fervour and charity, and who labours more than the rest to increase the treasure of the Church by his good works, has a greater share therein: *To every one that hath shall be given.*²

It would be a grave error therefore to say: What is the use of fatiguing oneself in doing good, if through the Communion of Saints the good that is done in the Church becomes common to all? Is it not much better to cast all the work on the shoulders of

¹ John xv. 5.

² Matt. xxv. 29.

others, and then profit by their labours? To imagine anything of the kind would be a fatal mistake, for if you contribute little, little also shall you receive, just as happens in commercial companies where the gains are not divided in equal portions among all the shareholders, but are distributed according to the amount of capital subscribed by each. Besides, spiritual writers teach that in every good work three fruits are to be distinguished—a general fruit, in which all have a share; a special fruit, for that person to whom we intend to have it applied; and a very special fruit, which falls to him who does the work, and which is intended for his own sanctification. The works done by others, then, are of no advantage to you if you yourself are idle.

In short, participation in merits is not destined by God to favour idleness, but to make up for our indigence and to help our weakness. Hence, far from serving as a pretext excusing us from the practice of good works, it should rather prove a source of help and encouragement to perform them with greater fervour.

III. Thus far regarding the communion that exists between the members of the Church militant on earth. Let us now turn to examine the communion that unites us to the saints in heaven and to the suffering souls in purgatory.

The communion that exists between us and the saints in heaven consists in this, that we honour them by our veneration, rejoice in their happiness as if it were our own, and give thanks to God for the graces He has accorded them and for the glory with which He has crowned them. On the other hand, the saints regard us as their brethren and desire to see us one day the companions of their glory, and therefore do they pray for us, intercede for us, and look after our interests before the throne of God. Assured, as they are, of their own felicity, they are full of solicitude for our salvation and take part in the combats and dangers to which they see us exposed here on earth. In life they loved their neighbour and prayed for him; much more do they love him in heaven, where charity is perfect and free from all admixture; and much more ardently do they pray for him now that their intercession is more powerful with God.

The saints, then, are our protectors, our intercessors, our advocates before the throne of God. This is an article of faith which cannot be called into doubt, for it is clearly based on the testimony of Sacred Scripture; and on this truth rests the invocation of the saints, the salutary practice of having recourse to them in order that they may obtain us the help and assistance of God, together with all the graces

and blessings we stand in need of. True, indeed, we can at all times have direct recourse to God Himself, who is always ready to hear us and to grant our request, if we only pray in the proper way; yet, notwithstanding this, we ought to make use of the saints, who are more acceptable to God than we are, and whose supplications He receives more favourably and grants more quickly. It is not distrust of Divine help, then, nor any want of faith that induces us to unite our prayers with those of the saints; but simply our conviction that their intercession is pleasing to God.

As the saints in heaven pray for the faithful on earth, so the faithful on earth pray for the suffering souls in purgatory. With the means which Divine Providence puts in our hands we can be of great help to them in shortening the term of their sufferings and in hastening their entrance into heaven; while on their part, by their intercession, they can obtain, and actually do obtain, important favours for us, both corporal and spiritual.

The existence of purgatory, and the holy mutual intercourse between us and the souls detained therein, are truths comprised in the article on the Communion of Saints; but as the subject is not one that can be dismissed in a few words, we shall return to it at greater length on a suitable occasion.

To conclude: The Church triumphant interests itself in the Church militant, and the Church militant in the Church suffering; and hence that admirable harmony in the mystic body of Christ, which we call the Communion of Saints, and which is an article of our faith.

Let us, then, admire the adorable providence of God, which has succeeded in uniting and binding together in so marvellous a way all the members of His Church, and in establishing amongst them a perfect communion of spiritual goods; but especially let us endeavour to derive therefrom all the advantages on account of which He instituted it. The fruit of this instruction, then, can be reduced to these three practical conclusions:—

The first is to do our best to remain always in the grace of God, so as never to be deprived of the merit of the good works that are done in the Church; and should our frailty lead us to fall into a grave fault, let us hasten to be cleansed from it so as to re-enter at once into participation in these goods. Nay, that we may acquire a still greater share of them, let us not rest content simply with remaining in the state of grace, but let us further endeavour to excite within us a holy fervour rendering us prompt to do good, fruitful in works of piety

and religion, and consequently capable of participating more abundantly in the merits of others.

In the second place, we ought to honour the saints and recommend ourselves to their intercession because of the need we have of their assistance. If we have our salvation at heart, if it is a matter of vital importance to us, if it is the one thing necessary, it is clear that we should utilize and employ all those excellent and propitious means which religion furnishes to ensure success. Now, one of these means is the mediation of the saints. God wishes them to ask graces for us, to intercede in our favour, and to be, so to say, agents and co-operators in the work of our salvation. Let us, then, endeavour to merit their protection ; and to this end let us respect, love, and invoke them.

In the third place, we ought to help the suffering souls in purgatory as far as we can, so that we ourselves may be one day copiously helped in return. The remarks already made regarding the extent of participation in merits in this life apply to participation in suffrages after death. For the suffering souls do not share in them in the same degree, but simply according to the measure of charity which they have practised during life : *With what measure you mete, it shall be measured out to you again.*¹ A day shall come when we too shall sigh for the prayers of the faithful on earth, if indeed a worse fate shall not have befallen us ; but vainly shall we expect such help if our own indifference to the fate of others shall have rendered us unworthy of assistance. Let us, then, be generous to-day if we wish to be treated generously when our own turn comes, and when we too shall have entered through the portals of death into a like state of want and need.

Such, then, are the conclusions which we ought for our own sakes to derive from the present article, and from the Church's teaching on the Communion of Saints.

¹ Matt. vii. 2.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

1.—Importance of this article.

ON seeing this article on the Forgiveness of Sins included amongst the other articles of the Creed, no one can doubt that it contains a mystery at once divine and most necessary to salvation. It has been already shown that the path to Christian piety is open to no one without a firm belief in all the truths contained in the Creed. Now, if this truth, which is already clear in itself, required any further proof, our Saviour's declaration should suffice. Shortly before His Ascension into heaven He enlightened the minds of His disciples *that they might understand the Scriptures*, in these words: *It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, the third day; and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*¹

If he carefully considers these words, the pastor will readily understand that, while other truths of religion must be made known to the faithful, he is under a particular obligation to explain this article with special care.

I.—THE POWER OF FORGIVING SINS

2.—The Church has the power of forgiving sins.

On this point, therefore, it will be the pastor's duty to show that in the Catholic Church is to be found not only "forgiveness of sin," as Isaias had foretold: *The people that dwell therein, shall have their iniquity taken away from them;*² but also that the Church herself has the power of forgiving sins; and, furthermore, that when the priest uses this power rightly, and according to the rules prescribed by our Lord, we are bound to believe that sins are truly remitted and pardoned.

¹ Luke xxiv. 45-47.

² Is. xxxiii. 24.

3.—Sins are re- When for the first time we profess our faith on
mitted (a) by being cleansed by holy baptism, this pardon is
baptism. so full and entire that no sin, whether original or
actual, whether of commission or omission, remains to be blotted
out, nor punishment to be endured. Yet the grace of baptism
does not grant exemption from all the infirmities of nature.
On the contrary, we have all to strive against the movements
of concupiscence, which unceasingly tempts us to sin, so much so
that there is hardly one to be found who resists so resolutely, or
attends to his salvation so vigilantly, as to escape unscathed.

4.—And (b) by As it was necessary that a power of forgiving
the power of sins other than that of baptism should exist in
the keys. the Church, to her were entrusted the keys of
the kingdom of heaven ; by which each one, if penitent, may
obtain the remission of his sins, even though he were a sinner
to the last day of his life. And that such is the case we have the
very clearest proofs in Holy Writ. Thus, in the Gospel of St.
Matthew we read that our Lord thus addressed Peter : *I will give
to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt
bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven : and whatsoever
thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven ;*¹ and :
*Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven ;
and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in
heaven ;*² while St. John testifies that, having breathed on His
apostles, our Lord said to them : *Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose
sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them ; and whose sins you
shall retain, they are retained.*³

5.—All sins can We must not, however, imagine that this power
be remitted. is limited to certain classes of sins. No crime
however heinous, can be committed, or even
conceived, which Holy Church has not power to pardon, just as
there is no one so vile and so abandoned as to be left without
confident hope of pardon, provided he truly repents of his sins.

Furthermore, this power is not so restricted as to be available
for use only at certain special times. At whatsoever hour the
sinner wishes to obtain forgiveness he shall not be rejected.
This is our Saviour's teaching. When the Prince of the Apostles
demanded how often sinners are to be pardoned, and whether
they were to be pardoned as many as seven times, He replied :
*I say not to thee, till seven times ; but till seventy times seven times.*⁴

¹ Matt. xvi. 19.² Matt. xviii. 18.³ John xx. 22, 23.⁴ Matt. xviii. 22.

II.—THE MINISTERS OF THIS POWER

6.—Entrusted to bishops and priests alone. If we consider its ministers, however, this divine power will be found less extensive. Not to all and every one, but to bishops and priests alone, has our Lord given this high and holy office. The same must be said regarding the manner in which it is to be exercised. It is only through the Sacraments validly administered that sins can be remitted. No power has been given to the Church to absolve from sin otherwise. Hence it follows that in the remission of sin both priests and Sacraments are, so to say, instruments which Christ our Lord, the Author and Giver of Salvation, makes use of to grant us pardon of our sins and give us the grace of justification.

III.—INESTIMABLE VALUE OF THIS POWER

7.—Greatness of this gift. To excite the faithful to a higher appreciation of this heavenly gift bestowed on the Church by God's singular mercy towards us, and to encourage them to use and practise it with greater zeal and piety, the pastor should endeavour to point out the dignity and extent of the grace it imparts. This they will more readily understand if it is brought home to their minds how great is the power by which sins are forgiven, and the unjust made just. It is beyond all doubt that this is done by the infinite and immense power of God—that same power which we believe to have been necessary to raise the dead to life and create the world from nothing. Nay, if, as the authority of St. Augustine assures us, it must be deemed a greater work to make the wicked good than to create heaven and earth out of nothing, and if creation itself can be accomplished by nothing short of infinite power, it follows that the forgiveness of sins must with greater reason be attributed to an infinite power.

8.—Sins are remitted by the power of God alone. Hence we acknowledge as most true the words of the Fathers proclaiming that sins are forgiven by God alone, and that this wonderful effect must be ascribed to no other cause than to His infinite goodness and power: *I am He*, says the Lord, speaking through the Prophet, *I am He that blot out thy iniquities*.¹ And indeed there is much similarity between the way in which sins are forgiven and that by which a debt is cancelled. A debt can be forgiven by none

¹ Is. xliii. 25

but the creditor. Now, by sin we contract a debt to God alone—do we not daily pray : *Forgive us our debts ?* And hence it is clear that our sins can be pardoned by Him alone.

9.—This power was given to none before the Birth of Christ.

This admirable and truly divine power was imparted to no creature till God had become Man. Christ our Saviour, Himself true God, was the first one who as Man received this power from

His Heavenly Father : *That you may know*, says He, *that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins* (then said He to the man sick of the palsy), *Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.*¹ But as He had become Man to grant forgiveness of their sins to men, so He communicated that same power to bishops and priests, previous to His Ascension into heaven where He sits for ever at the right hand of God. But still, as we have already pointed out, Christ forgives sins by His own power, the others only as His ministers.

If, then, we are bound to respect and reverence in a special way the effects of infinite power, precious indeed must we consider this gift which has been bestowed by the bounty of Christ on His Church.

10.—Sins are remitted through the Blood of Christ.

The very manner which God our most merciful Father has adopted to wash away the sins of the world, is also highly calculated to stimulate the minds of the faithful to contemplate the greatness of this blessing. For it was in the blood of His only begotten Son that He willed that our sins should be expiated, that this Son should voluntarily pay the penalty which we deserved for our sins, that the just should be condemned for the unjust, and the innocent suffer a most bitter death for the guilty.

When, then, we reflect in our hearts that *we were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled,*² we shall readily conclude that nothing more salutary could have been conferred on us than this power of forgiving sins— a power which displays the unutterable providence of God and the excess of His love for us. From this reflection most abundant fruit is bound to follow.

11.—Greatness of the gift of the power of the keys.

For he that offends God by as much as a single mortal sin instantly forfeits all the merits he has acquired through the Passion and Death of Christ, and is completely shut out of the gates of paradise, which had been previously closed, but which our

¹ Matt. ix. 6.

² 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Saviour had opened anew to all by His Passion. Reflecting on this, we cannot but be deeply concerned at the sight of our misery. But if we fix our minds on the wonderful power which God has given to His Church, and if, strong in the faith of this article, we believe that to each one is offered the means of being restored under God's helping hand to the dignity of his former state, it will be impossible not to conceive unbounded joy and gladness, and not to give unending thanks to God.

If, when we happen to be seriously ill, the medicines given us by the careful and skilful physician appear good and welcome to us, how much more welcome should those remedies be which the wisdom of God has established to heal our souls and restore them to the life of grace, especially since, unlike the medicines applied to the body, they bring no uncertain hope of recovery but assured health to all those who desire to be cured.

IV.—RECOURSE TO THE POWER OF THE KEYS

12.—Frequent use of this power. Having made known to the faithful the excellence of this great and glorious blessing, the pastor will exhort them to avail of it with great care. If a man makes no use of what is useful and necessary he can hardly be supposed not to despise it. This is especially the case here, since in giving to His Church the power of forgiving sins, it was our Lord's intention that all should have recourse to this saving remedy. As no one can be cleansed without baptism, so also he that desires to recover the grace of baptism, which has been lost by mortal sin, must have recourse to another means of expiation, which is precisely the Sacrament of Penance.

But here the faithful should be warned against the danger of sinning more readily or repenting more slowly because they have at hand a means of obtaining pardon which, as we have seen, is so complete and is limited by no time. In the one case they are clearly convicted of injurious contempt of this divine power, and are consequently unworthy of divine mercy; in the other case it is much to be feared that, surprised by death, in vain will they have made profession of belief in the remission of sins, which by their sloth and procrastination they deservedly forfeited.

THE TENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught by the Tenth Article: "The Forgiveness of sins" ?

A. The Tenth Article of the Creed teaches us that Jesus Christ has left to His Church the power of forgiving sins.

Q. Can the Church forgive every sort of sin ?

A. Yes, the Church can forgive all sins, no matter how many or how grave they may be, because Jesus Christ has given her full power to bind and to loose.

Q. Who exercises this power of forgiving sins in the Church ?

A. Those who exercise the power of forgiving sins in the Church are, first of all, the Pope, who alone possesses this power in all its plenitude ; then the bishops, and, dependent upon the bishops, the priests.

Q. How does the Church forgive sins ?

A. The Church forgives sins through the merits of Jesus Christ, by conferring the Sacraments instituted by Him for this purpose ; especially the sacraments of baptism and penance.

Forty-second Instruction on the Creed,

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

ANOTHER very precious blessing which we receive from God through the Church is that of the forgiveness of sins, which shall form the subject of the present instruction on the tenth article of the Creed—an article in which we make profession of our belief that in the Catholic Church there exists the power of forgiving sins and that outside the Catholic Church pardon cannot be obtained.

The better to understand this, we shall examine one by one, in due order, the four following points: (1) On whom has this power been conferred? (2) how is it exercised? (3) what is its extent? and (4) what its true value?

I. As regards the first point, it is evident that the power of remitting sins can come from God alone; for as it is He alone who is offended by sin, to Him alone it naturally belongs to grant pardon, or to give to whom He pleases the power of pardoning in His name. Now, to whom has God given this power? Before the coming of the Messiah no one ever possessed it, neither under the law of nature nor under the written law. There were indeed many holy patriarchs filled with the spirit of God; but there is not the slightest indication that such power was conferred on even a single one of them.

This power was reserved for the Church of Jesus Christ. He as Head of that Church was the first to exercise it on this earth. He exercised it in favour of Mary Magdalene, of the paralytic, of the woman taken in adultery, and of others. The Pharisees were greatly scandalized at the exercise of a power which was so unheard of, and which seemed to them so far above His capacity; but they were wrong, for such power was His by every right, both as God and as man. And as He had to leave this earth, He gave this power to His Church. With this object in view He instituted the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, and entrusted the administration of them to His representatives, that is to say, to the apostles and their successors, in the celebrated words: *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy*

*Ghost ; and : As the Father hath sent Me, so I also send you ; and : Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*¹

It was on the bishops and priests of His Church, then, that He conferred this power. True, baptism can be validly administered by any one of the faithful, nay even by a heretic or infidel—the Lord having thus willed in view of the indispensable necessity of this sacrament ; but the sacrament of penance in which, properly speaking, consists the judicial power of remitting sins, admits of no minister but the priest. The priest in reality is nothing more than the minister and instrument of the power of God, who has deigned to use him to produce this extraordinary effect ; but he yet acts with authority : his word really possesses the power of effacing sin—not merely of declaring that sin is effaced. And hence he does not merely say as Nathan said to David : *The Lord hath taken away thy sin ;*² but his words are : “ I, as representative of Jesus Christ, absolve thee from thy sins.” From this truth two conclusions should be drawn :—

(1) That this power can really be found in the Catholic Church alone. Being annexed by God to the legitimate succession of the apostolic ministry, it can be found only in that Church in which that succession has been perpetually maintained. Now, we have already seen that it is in the Roman Catholic Church alone that it has been unfailingly maintained. In that Church alone, then, was it possible to perpetuate the power of remitting sins ; and hence vainly do heretics flatter themselves that, following the Gospel and leading an upright life, they need have no fear of being reprobated. Be their life ever so upright, they can hardly claim that they have never sinned ; and if they have sinned, to whom are they to go for pardon, if the succession of the priesthood has been interrupted amongst them, and if by that very fact the power of forgiving sins has been lost.

(2) The second conclusion to be drawn is this, that we should entertain a profound respect for the priesthood, invested as it is by God with an authority truly divine. What dignity is to be compared with that which dispenses God’s mercies, and is empowered to cancel sin, confer grace, close up hell that yawns under the sinner’s feet, and reopen the gates of heaven that have been shut by sin ? If faith had not grown so cold and feeble among Christians they would assuredly set a high value on the sacerdotal character, which always remains unchanged, no matter what the conduct of the person who bears it.

¹ John xx. 22, 23.

² 2 Kings xii. 13.

II. I have already indicated the means by which the Church exercises the power of remitting sins. The ordinary means assigned by God are two—baptism and penance. The former remits original sin, and in adults even all actual sins. But as baptism imprints a character and hence cannot be repeated, and as, on the other hand, we are exposed by our frailty to the danger of losing the grace received in baptism, the Lord in the richness of His mercy has prepared another remedy to cancel the sins committed after baptism, and that remedy is the sacrament of penance—"the second plank after shipwreck." Hence it is that these sacraments are called the sacraments of the dead.

You will observe that I have referred to these as the *ordinary means*; for we know that perfect contrition can effect the remission of sins. But it is an extraordinary means intended to supply the place of these two sacraments only when it is impossible to receive them.

III. But is this power of remitting sins limited by any reservation or restriction? No, it is not limited or restricted in any way—neither as regards the number of sins nor the class of sins.

It is not limited as regards the number of sins. To this sacrament can be applied the answer made by our Lord to St. Peter's question regarding the pardon of offences: *How often shall I forgive my brother?* Our Lord prescribed neither measure nor number nor limit of any kind: *I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven,*¹ was His reply. In the same way, as often as you present yourself with the requisite dispositions you will be absolved. Nor is there any restriction as regards the class of sin. Imagine the most monstrous sin that can be committed—well, the Church has the power of remitting it: *Whatsoever thou shalt loose.* As there is no sin that God cannot pardon, so there is no sin that cannot be remitted by His Church, since in this respect the authority of the Church is the authority of God Himself, who has conferred it on His Church without any limitation or reservation: *Whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.*

True, indeed, it is said in the Gospels that there are certain sins that are forgiven neither in this world nor in the next; but this must not be taken too literally, as if there are certain sins which in themselves and of their nature are unforgivable. The real meaning is that it is difficult to obtain pardon of them—not, indeed, because of any want of power on the part of the Church, but because of the evil

¹ Matt. xviii. 22.

dispositions which they produce in the souls of those who commit them and which render the Church's power nugatory in their case. Hence, though the Church has the power of remitting them, it is only rarely that they are remitted.

Oh, what a consoling article is not this regarding the remission of sins! It was precisely to excite our confidence, says St. Francis de Sales, that God daily puts it on our lips. And should anyone among us ever be discouraged or cast down at the sight of his sins, or have fears regarding the pardon of them, let him repeat within himself: "I believe the remission of sins." And should he fear that his faults are enormous, their malice excessive, and their number incalculable—no matter, there is this article of the Creed telling him of the remission of sins. The Lord has willed the remission of sins to be an article of faith, so that we may rest assured we actually receive it as often as we properly approach the sacrament which He has instituted for this purpose.

Carefully observe, however, that this certainty only regards the power of the Church—a power which, as each one can easily see, can never produce its effects as long as the penitent has not the dispositions required by God as a necessary condition of pardon. On this head it would bewail that certain Christians should reflect who seem to imagine that the whole value of their confession consists in the absolution pronounced by the priest; and hence, provided they obtain such absolution, they go away satisfied that they have obtained pardon. There could not be a more serious mistake, for absolution alone is not enough to efface sins; but along with it the penitent's own good dispositions are required to assure the effect of the absolution pronounced by the minister of the sacrament.

Thus, while as regards the authority conferred on the Church, there can be no doubt as to the extent of the power of absolving from sins; yet there always remains on our part the fear that we may not have done all that we ought to do or can do. If we have taken the necessary precautions on our part we need not be anxious as to the result—nay, we should rather trust in God and place all our hopes in His goodness; but still, no matter what efforts we may have made, no matter what our dispositions may appear to have been, we can never be absolutely certain that we have obtained pardon, the Lord having thus ordained for our greater good. For (1) the uncertainty of pardon inspires us with a holy fear of not having done all that we ought to do to merit it, and thus leads us to redouble our efforts to be truly worthy; (2) it serves as a barrier and restraint against falling

into new sins—for how expose ourselves to new faults when we have reason to doubt that the old ones have been pardoned; (3) it leads us to detest our sins continually and to expiate them by true and salutary penance. Hence it is that the Holy Ghost warns us against casting aside all fear regarding those sins which we look upon as already pardoned: *Be not without fear about sin forgiven.*¹

IV. But what is particularly worthy of admiration in this article is the greatness of the gift. Now to grasp the greatness of the gift it would be necessary first to comprehend the greatness of the malice of sin. Yet little as we really are alive to the malice of sin, would it not seem impossible that it is really forgiven did not faith assure us of the contrary? Now this sin which is an infinite offence against God and which merits infinite punishment; this sin which was not pardoned to the angels; this sin which of its nature is an irreparable evil, since it can be cancelled neither by the tears of all penitents, nor by the blood of all the martyrs, nor by the merits of all the saints—this sin which hence calls for the infinite satisfaction offered by a God crucified for us—this sin is remitted by the ministers of the Church; it is remitted at all times and in all places; it is remitted indefinitely, without restriction as to number or gravity.

And on what conditions is it remitted? It is here that the goodness of God shines yet more brightly. If before granting pardon God had exacted difficult conditions such as rigorous fasts, cruel flagellations, trying pilgrimages, we should beyond all doubt have to submit to these conditions and even regard them as a great mercy. But, as we know, God demands nothing of the kind: He simply requires sincere sorrow for our sins, a firm resolution of sinning no more, together with the trifling confusion of making them known exactly as they are to one of His ministers who, far from being an angel of heaven, is a frail and sinful man like anyone else, and who is strictly bound never to reveal them in any way, directly or indirectly. What a blessing, then, is not this which God has placed at our disposal in His Church!

Yet what use is it to many Christians who avail of it so little and who even use it to their own damnation? Though many profess to believe in the remission of sins, there is reason to fear that they do not all obtain it, as will be evident from a glance at the conduct of various classes of people:—

Some do not as much as condescend to apply the remedy, even

¹ Ecclus v 5.

though they have the greatest need of it. Conscious that they are in a state of sin, they yet go their way without a thought of getting rid of their burden. Of what use is the remission of sins to such as these ! I do not mean to say that there is a strict obligation of going to confession immediately after falling into sin ; but assuredly to put it off for weeks and weeks, and even for months and years, amounts to practical contempt of God's grace, and is attended by serious risk, considering the many dangers to which the life of man is exposed.

If a man happens to be laid prostrate by one of those terrible maladies that take away speech and consciousness—a case by no means rare—everything possible is done to revive him : fire and iron are resorted to, not to restore him to health, for this is out of the question, but to obtain him a moment's consciousness so that he may be enabled to confess his sins to the priest, give some sign of sorrow for them, and obtain absolution. All this is very right and proper ; but why is not this done by those who have the sacrament of penance at their disposal, who are in full possession of their faculties, and are perfectly able to do all that they now vainly hope the invalid may be enabled to do ? Why is it that they live exposed to the danger of falling into a misfortune which causes them so much anxiety in the case of their friend ? What assurance have they that the like is not going to happen in their own case ?

Bear this in mind, then, that such negligence is often punished by the privation of the sacrament of penance in the hour of one's greatest need. It appears to be a mere accident ; but in reality it is a just judgment inflicted by God in punishment of the contempt of the graces which He so often holds out in the sacrament of penance.

Others do, indeed, make use of this remedy, but they do so in a bad or very imperfect manner. With them confession is nothing more than a matter of memory and words, and not of heart and affection—it is a mere narrative, not a true conversion of heart ; there is neither repentance for the past nor a firm resolution for the future ; and the result is that they fall back into the same sins and become the same as before. Now, of what use to these is the remission of sins instituted by Jesus Christ ? They do indeed appear to show that they desire it ; but as they desire it according to their own caprice and not according to the rules established by God, they do not obtain it—nay, instead of obtaining it, they but commit a new and worse sin.

Now what is the usual outcome of all this ? This : as they like to deceive themselves during life, God permits them to deceive themselves

even in the hour of death; as they have never practised, and hence never learned, true penance during life, God permits their penance to continue false even in death,—they rely on specious appearances which readily present themselves in such circumstances, and eventually die in their sins.

But the most grievous abuse of this merciful gift of God is that practised by those who avail of it in order to be able to sin with greater readiness and facility. Seeing that Jesus Christ has prepared in confession a prompt and ready remedy against sin, they are encouraged thereby to commit sin, saying in their heart, if not with their lips: "I will commit this sin, and then I will go to confession"—as much as to say: "I will commit this sin, then I shall repent of it." Now what sort of reasoning is this? If I desire to turn you aside from a false step it is enough for me to convince you that you will have to repent of it. And yet you will find men encouraged to commit sin by the very thought of future repentance! Besides all this, is it not monstrous to find a motive for offending God in the very thought that should excite us to love Him more and more, and to act as if His goodness should be regarded as a reason for inflicting further outrage on Him!

CHAPTER XIV

THE ELEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE RÓMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

1.—Importance of
this Article.

THE value of this article in establishing the truth of our faith is manifest from the fact that not only is it proposed by Sacred Scripture to the belief of the faithful, but is also confirmed by several arguments. Now, as we hardly find this to be the case with regard to other articles of the Creed, we may conclude that on the Resurrection of the body as on its most solid foundation rests our hope of salvation; indeed as the Apostle reasons, *if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again; and if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*¹ The pastor, then, will not display less diligence in explaining this article than the impious have expended in attempts to overthrow it. Besides, as will appear a little further on, great and important advantages are derived by the faithful from a knowledge of this article.

2.—Why called
the Resurrec-
tion of the body.

Now, at the outset it will be necessary to note that the resurrection of mankind is here called “the resurrection of the body”; and not without good reason. For thereby the Apostles desired to convey a truth that must necessarily be admitted, that is to say, the immortality of the soul. Lest anyone, then, despite the fact that the immortality of the soul is plainly taught in many passages of Holy Writ, should be led to imagine that the soul dies along with the body, and that both are to be restored to life again, mention is here made of the resurrection of the body only. Furthermore, though in Holy Writ the word *flesh* often denotes the whole man, as, for example, in *Isaias: All flesh*

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 13.

is grass;¹ and in St. John : *The Word was made flesh*;² yet in this article the word signifies the body alone, thus giving us to understand that of the two parts, soul and body, of which man is composed, the body alone is subject to corruption, and returns to the dust of which it is made ; while the soul remains incorrupt and immortal.

Now, as no one can be recalled to life unless he has previously died, the soul, properly speaking, cannot be said to rise again.

Another reason why the word flesh is used is to confute the heresy of Hymeneus and Philetus, who, even in the lifetime of the Apostle, asserted that as often as the resurrection is referred to in Holy Writ what is meant is not a corporal but a spiritual resurrection by which we rise from the death of sin to a life of grace. Now, the words of the article make it clear that the error in question is to be rejected, while at the same time they confirm the truth of a real resurrection of the body.

I.—PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

3.—Examples of the Resurrection. It will be the pastor's care to illustrate this truth by examples taken from the Old and New Testaments, as well as from ecclesiastical history. Thus, in the Old Testament,³ persons were restored to life by Elias and Eliseus ; while, besides those whom Christ our Lord raised from the dead, others were recalled to life by the holy Apostles and others. All these resurrections confirm the truth taught in this article. For once we believe that many have been raised from the dead, we are naturally led to believe in the general resurrection. In fact, the first fruit to be derived from such miracles is to yield to this article our most unwavering belief.

There are many other passages which will readily occur to those who are fairly conversant with Holy Scripture. In the Old Testament, however, the most remarkable passages are in the Book of Job : *In my flesh I shall see my God* ;⁴ and in Daniel, when speaking of those *who sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake : he says, some unto life everlasting, and others unto eternal reproach*.⁵ As for the New Testament, there are the passages recorded by St. Matthew concerning the disputation our Saviour carried on with the Sadducees,⁶ and by the Evangelists

¹ Isa. xl. 6. ² John i. 14. ³ 3 Kings xvii. 22 ; 4 Kings iv. 34 ; Matt. ix. 24 ; Acts ix. 40. ⁴ Job xix. 26. ⁵ Dan. xii. 2. ⁶ Matt. xxii. 23.

concerning the Last Judgment.¹ To this may be added the precise statements of the Apostle in his letters to the Corinthians² and Thessalonians.³

4.—Comparisons to illustrate the subject. Though the resurrection is absolutely certain by faith, yet it will be highly useful to show by analogy and argument that what faith proposes for our belief contains nothing contrary to nature or to reason.

Thus, the Apostle, in answer to the question, How do the dead rise again? replied: *Senseless man, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die first; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be; but bare grain, as of wheat or of some of the rest; but God giveth it a body as He will;*⁴ and shortly after he adds: *It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption.*⁵ St. Gregory observes that to this comparison many others may be added: "The sun," he says, "daily disappears from our eyes as if it died, and daily appears once more as if it rose again; trees lose their foliage, and are again renewed as by a resurrection; and seeds putrify and die only to rise again by germination."

5.—Reasons. The reasons, too, which are adduced by ecclesiastical writers are sufficiently calculated to prove this truth.

(a) The first is that our souls are immortal, and, being a part of us, possess a natural propensity to be united to the body. This being so, their perpetual separation from those bodies must be regarded as unnatural. Now, as that which is contrary to nature and in a state of violence cannot be permanent, it is but fitting that the soul be reunited one day to its body and consequently that the body should rise again. It was precisely this argument that our Saviour made use of in disputing with the Sadducees when He deduced the resurrection of the body from the immortality of the soul.⁶

(b) In the next place, as a God of all justice has established punishments for the wicked, and rewards for the good; and, as very many of the former depart out of this world before they have suffered due punishment, while very many of the latter die without having received the reward of their virtues, the soul ought to be reunited to the body, in order that, for the wickedness committed or for the good accomplished, the body, which man uses as an instrument of good as well as of evil, may share with

¹ Matt. xxv. 31. ² 1 Cor. xv. 12. ³ 1 Thess. iv. 13. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 36-38.
⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 42. ⁶ Matt. xxii. 23.

the soul in the punishments or rewards it has deserved. This point has been carefully developed by St. Chrysostom in a homily to the people of Antioch.

In like manner, the Apostle, speaking of the resurrection, says : *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*¹—words that cannot be imagined to refer to the miseries of the soul ; for the soul is immortal, and could enjoy happiness in the life to come, even if the body did not rise again. His words, then, must be understood of the whole man ; for if due reward does not await the body for labours it has endured, all those who, like the Apostles, endured so many afflictions and evils in this life would assuredly be the most miserable of all men.

The selfsame teaching, but much more clearly, he conveys to the Thessalonians : *We glory in the churches of God, for your patience and faith, and in all your persecutions and tribulations, which you endure—for an example of the just judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which also you suffer ; seeing it is a just thing with God, to repay tribulation to them that trouble you : and to you who are troubled, rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with the angels of His power, in a flame of fire, yielding vengeance to them who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*²

(c) Add to this that as long as the soul is separated from the body men cannot enjoy that complete happiness which is replete with every good. If a part separated from the whole is necessarily imperfect, the soul separated from the body is equally so. Hence it follows that the resurrection of the body is necessary towards the full and perfect happiness of the soul.

By these and similar arguments, then, the pastor will be able to supply instruction to his flock regarding this article.

6.—All shall rise again.

He should also show, according to the teaching of the Apostle, who they are who are to rise again. Writing to the Corinthians he says : *As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.*³ All, then, the bad as well as the good, shall rise again from the dead, though the lot of all shall not be the same : *They that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life ; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.*⁴

But when we say ALL, we understand both those who shall have died before the Day of Judgment and those who shall die then. That the Church acquiesces in the opinion that all without

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 19.

² 2 Thess. i. 4-8.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

⁴ John v. 29.

exception shall die, and that this opinion is more consonant to truth, is the recorded teaching of St. Jerome ; and St. Augustine is of the same mind on the matter. Nor are the Apostle's words to the Thessalonians opposed to this Doctrine : *The dead who are in Christ, shall rise first ; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air* ;¹ for, as St. Ambrose, in explanation of this passage, remarks : " In that taking up, death shall first occur as if it were in a deep sleep, and the soul going out from the body shall return in an instant ; we shall die while we are being taken up, so that coming before the Lord, we may receive our souls in His presence—for the dead cannot be with the Lord." This opinion is also supported by the authority of St. Augustine in his *City of God*.

II.—CONDITION OF THE RISEN BODY

7.—Each one shall rise in his own body.

As it is highly important for us to be fully convinced that the very identical body that belongs to each one of us shall be raised to life even though already corrupted and returned to dust, the pastor will be careful to explain this thoroughly. Such is the meaning of the Apostle when he says : *This corruptible must put on incorruption*²—the word *this* evidently denoting his own body. Job also had most clearly foretold the same : *In my flesh I shall see my God ; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another*.³ It is also inferred from the very definition of the resurrection which is, according to Damascene, " a calling back to that state from which one has fallen." In fine, if we bear in mind the reasons for a resurrection, as already explained, there will be no further room for doubt.

8.—Reason.

For, as we saw, the body is to rise again so that *every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil*.⁴ Man, therefore, must rise again in the very body by the help of which he served God or served the devil, in order that in the same body he may either receive the reward and crown of his victory or endure the most dreadful pains and torments.

9.—The body shall rise perfect, with no blemish.

Not only shall the body rise again, but everything that pertains to the perfection of its nature, and to the adornment and comeliness of man, shall be restored to him. For this we have the beautiful testimony of St. Augustine : " Then shall there be

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16.

² 1 Cor. xv. 53.

³ Job. xix. 26, 27.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 10.

nothing defective in the body ; those, for instance, who have been overburdened with flesh shall not receive back all that mass of flesh. All that exceeds due proportion shall be deemed superfluous ; while, on the other hand, all the ravages that sickness or old age may have made, as, for instance, leanness and thinness of the body, shall be repaired through Christ's divine power. Not only shall He restore our bodies themselves, but with them whatever may have been taken away through the misfortunes of this life." Elsewhere he says: " Man shall not receive that hair which he actually had, but only that which will best become him, according to the words : *The very hairs of your head are all numbered*¹—all of which are to be restored in the way Divine wisdom deems best."

As the members are necessary to the integrity of the human body, they especially shall all be restored. Those who were blind from their birth, or had accidentally lost the use of their sight, the lame, the maimed, and the paralysed, shall rise again with bodies complete and perfect. Otherwise the soul, which has so intense a desire for union with the body, would never have the satisfaction it cries out for ; and yet we unhesitatingly believe that in the resurrection all our desires shall be fully satisfied. In addition to this, we know that the resurrection, no less than the creation, is one of the principal works of God. Now, if in the beginning all things came forth perfect from the hands of God, we must admit that it will be the same in the resurrection.

10.—The bodies of the martyrs. Nor is this true only in the case of the bodies of the martyrs, concerning whom St. Augustine says : " They shall not remain without their members ; for the absence of their members could not be other than a deformity. Otherwise, they who were beheaded should rise headless. In their members, however, they shall bear the wounds made by the sword ; but these wounds, like those of Christ, shall shine more resplendent than gold or precious stones."

11.—The bodies of the wicked. The wicked, too, shall rise with all their members, even with those lost by them through their own fault. The more members they have the more severe shall be the bitter pains with which they shall be punished ; and therefore the restoration of their members will redound, not to their happiness, but to their calamity and misery. For the merit of our acts is not ascribed to the members themselves, but to the person possessing these members. To those who have

¹ Luke xii. 7.

done penance, they shall be restored as a reward ; to those who have neglected to do so, as instruments of punishment.

If these considerations are seriously borne in mind by the pastor, he will never be short of abundant matter and ideas to excite and inflame the hearts of the faithful to the practice of piety, so that, having before their minds the troubles and afflictions of this life, they may eagerly look forward to that glorious and happy resurrection promised to the just and good.

III.—ENDOWMENTS OF THE RISEN BODY

It now remains for the faithful to understand
 12.—Immortality. that while as far as the substance of the body is concerned it is the selfsame, identical body which previously was dead that shall be raised from the dead, its condition shall be vastly changed. To omit various points of difference, all risen bodies will differ from their former state chiefly in this, that while they were previously subject to the laws of death they shall all be endowed with immortality after the resurrection. This applies to those of the bad as well as of the good.

For this wonderful restoration of our nature we are indebted to the glorious victory which Christ achieved over death, as is definitely laid down in Holy Writ ; thus : *He shall cast death down headlong for ever* ;¹ and elsewhere : *O death, I will be thy death* ;² and the Apostle explaining this says : *And the enemy death shall be destroyed last* ;³ while we read in St. John : *Death shall be no more*.⁴ Most fitting, indeed, was it that the sin of Adam should be far exceeded by the merit of Christ our Lord, who destroyed the empire of death ; and it was fully in keeping with Divine justice that the good should enjoy endless bliss, while the wicked, in the midst of eternal torments, should *seek death, and shall not find it ; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them*.⁵ Immortality, then, will be common to the good and to the wicked.

In addition to this, the risen bodies of the just
 13.—Gifts adorn- shall possess certain signal and glorious adorn-
 ing the risen ments, rendering them far more noble than
 bodies of the good. before. Amongst these are the four qualities or gifts which have been specially noticed by the Fathers in the teaching of the Apostle.

(a) The first is *impassibility*, a gift and endowment placing

¹ Is. xxv. 8.

² Osse xiii. 14.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 26.

⁴ Apoc. xxi. 4.

⁵ Apoc. ix. 6.

them beyond the reach of all suffering or pain : in one word, beyond the reach of anything disagreeable. Nothing shall be able to injure them—neither piercing cold, nor burning heat, nor stormy waters : *It is sown*, says the Apostle, *in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption*.¹ If theologians have used the word impassibility rather than incorruption, it was to show thereby that it belongs exclusively to the glorified body, and is not shared by the damned, whose bodies, though incorruptible can suffer heat and cold, and be afflicted with various torments.

(b) The second is *brightness*, by which the bodies of the just shall shine as the sun, as our Saviour testifies in St. Matthew, when He says : *Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father* ;² and lest anyone should call it into doubt, He gave an example of it in His own Transfiguration, The Apostle at one time speaks of it as glory, and at another as brightness : *He will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory* ;³ and again : *It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory*.⁴ Of this glory the people of Israel in the wilderness beheld some image when the face of Moses, on his speaking face to face with God and in His presence, did so shine that the children of Israel were unable to gaze upon it.

Now, this brightness is a radiance reflected on the body from the transcendent happiness of the soul—a certain communication of that bliss which the soul enjoys, just as the soul itself is rendered happy by participating in the happiness of God.

We must not, however, believe that all are endowed with this gift in an equal degree, as happens with regard to the first gift. The bodies of the just shall, indeed, be equally impassible, but they shall not all have the same degree of brightness. The Apostle thus testifies : *One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars ; for star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead*.⁵

(c) With this quality is united that called *agility*, whereby the body shall be delivered from the heaviness that now presses it down, and shall be made capable of moving with utmost ease and facility wherever the soul desires, as St. Augustine in the *City of God*, and St. Jerome on Isaias, have clearly taught. Hence it is that the Apostle has said : *It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power*.⁶

(d) To these is added that gift called *subtlety*, by virtue of which the body shall be completely subject to the dominion of the soul, shall obey the soul, and be ever ready to follow the soul's

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 42.² Matt. xiii. 43 ; Matt. xvii. 2.³ Philip iii. 21.⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 43.⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 41.⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 43.

desires, as is shown by the words of the Apostle: *It is sown a natural body; it shall rise a spiritual body.*¹

These are the principal points to be set forth in the explanation of this article.

IV.—FRUITS TO BE DRAWN FROM THIS ARTICLE

14.—Fruits of the Resurrection.

(a) In order that the faithful may be able to appreciate the fruit to be derived from a knowledge of these many and sublime mysteries, the pastor will first point out the boundless thanks we owe to God who *has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them to little ones.*² How many men there are who, though eminent for wisdom, and endowed with extraordinary learning, have ever remained blind to this most certain truth? The fact, then, that He has made known these truths to us, who could not otherwise aspire to such knowledge, binds us to celebrate His supreme goodness and mercy with unceasing praise.

(b) Another great advantage arising from meditation on this article is, that when we mourn the death of those who were linked to us by ties of friendship or kindred, it is easier to find consolation both for ourselves and others—a source of consolation drawn on by the Apostle when writing to the Thessalonians concerning those *who have slept.*³

(c) And in all the afflictions and miseries of life the thought of the resurrection that is to be will afford us the best consolation in sorrow, as we learn from the example of holy Job, who comforted his afflicted and troubled soul with the one hope that the day would come when in the resurrection he would behold the Lord his God.⁴

(d) The same thought will have great influence in persuading the faithful to take great care to lead a just and holy life, unstained by the defilement of sin. If they but consider the boundless riches that follow the resurrection, and that now await them they will be attracted to the pursuit of virtue and holiness; just as, on the other hand, nothing has greater efficacy in bridling the evil passions and in restraining souls from sin, than the frequent reminder of the evils and torments that shall afflict the wicked when on the last day they *shall come forth unto the resurrection of judgment.*⁵

Cor. xv. 44. ² Matt. xi. 25. ³ 1 Thess. iv. 13 ⁴ Job. xix. 26. ⁵ John v. 29.

THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

THE ELEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught by the Eleventh Article: "The Resurrection of the body" ?

A. The Eleventh Article of the Creed teaches us that all men will rise again, every soul resuming the body it had in this life.

Q. How will the resurrection of the dead be accomplished ?

A. The resurrection of the dead will be accomplished by the virtue of the Omnipotent God, to whom nothing is impossible.

Q. When will the resurrection of the dead take place ?

A. The resurrection of the dead shall take place at the end of the world, and shall be followed by the General Judgment.

Q. Why does God will the resurrection of the body ?

A. God wills the resurrection of the body in order that the soul, having done good or evil while united with the body, may also be rewarded or punished along with it.

Q. Will all rise in the same way ?

A. No, there will be a vast difference between the bodies of the

elect and the bodies of the damned ; because only the bodies of the elect shall have, like the risen Christ, the endowments of glorified bodies.

Q. What are the endowments that are to adorn the bodies of the elect ?

A. The endowments that shall adorn the bodies of the elect are : 1. Impassibility, by which they can never again be subject to evil, nor to any kind of pain, nor to need of food, of rest or the like ; 2. Brightness, by which they shall shine as the sun and as so many stars ; 3. Agility, by which they shall be able to pass in a moment and without fatigue from one place to another and from earth to heaven ; 4. Subtlety, by which without hindrance they shall be able to penetrate any body, as did Jesus Christ when risen from the dead.

Q. And the bodies of the damned, what of them ?

A. The bodies of the damned shall be destitute of all the endowments of the glorified bodies of the blessed, and shall bear upon them the appalling mark of eternal reprobation.

Forty-third Instruction on the Creed

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

THE fall of Adam brought two great misfortunes on the human race—the death of the body and the loss of the supernatural life of the soul; and it was from these two evils that our Lord Jesus Christ came on earth to release us by His Passion and death. He delivered us from the spiritual death of the soul by leaving us in the sacraments a means of perpetually applying His merits to our sanctification; and He delivered us from the death of the body, not indeed by exempting us from the law of death to which even He Himself submitted, but by making us triumph one day over death and, like Himself, come forth victorious from the tomb; so that as all men die in the first Adam, so all should return to life in the second Adam, who is Jesus Christ: *As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. By a man came death and by a man the resurrection of the dead.*¹

This is why, after having in the tenth article proposed to our belief the spiritual resurrection of the soul by means of the remission of sins, the Apostles' Creed proceeds in the eleventh article to propose "the resurrection of the body," words signifying that this body of ours, which shall have been separated from the soul by death, shall be united to it once more at the general judgment, and shall come to life again. This, too, is another blessing which we receive through the Church; for though the resurrection in itself is common to all—to the bad as well as to the good, to the faithless as well as to the faithful—yet a happy and glorious resurrection is reserved to the good alone; and it will be really our lot if we do not render ourselves unworthy of it and draw down on ourselves by our sins a different sort of resurrection—a resurrection baneful no less than terrible.

First of all, it will be well, says the Roman Catechism, to reflect on the meaning of this article and on the terms in which it is couched, for they reveal another truth of the highest importance. Why do we say: I believe the resurrection of the body, and not the resurrection of man? The latter would be correct, as it is correct to say that man

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

dies. Yet the Apostles' Creed thus expresses it, to prevent us from believing that the whole man dies both in soul and body. Man is composed of two elements. Of these he has one in common with the beasts, that is, the body with its senses ; the other he has in common with the angels, that is, his soul, which is all spiritual, and created to the image and likeness of God. Now the body alone dies on being separated from the soul ; but the soul does not die and cannot die, because it is immortal in its very nature. And hence in explicitly professing our belief in the resurrection of the body we thereby implicitly profess that the soul is immortal, and has no need to rise again ; and that as man dies as to his body but not as to his soul, so will he rise as to his body, not as to his soul.

That the soul survives the body is a truth clearly taught both by faith and reason.

By *faith*, which tells us that when the body returns to the dust from which it has been formed, the soul returns to the God who has created it ; that it is judged the moment it leaves the body ; that it is punished or rewarded, according to its works ; and finally that we pass from time to eternity, from the present imperfect life to life unending. Now as all this cannot be realized immediately in the case of the body which is consigned to the grave and there decays, it must be realized in the case of the soul which survives the body.

Reason is in perfect accord with faith on this point, and the pagans themselves recognized this truth by the sole light of nature. Seeing that the soul is essentially simple ; that it is not composed of parts like the body, and consequently that it can neither fall into decay nor corruption ; that unlike the soul of animals it is endowed with reason, understanding and liberty ; that it can discern good from evil and freely choose between the one and the other ; that its bad deeds cause it regret and remorse, while its good deeds cause it a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction ; and, finally, that it is tormented by a boundless desire of happiness which all the goods of earth are unable to satisfy—seeing all this the wise men of pagan times were at one in holding this truth, that the soul is not subject to death, and that it is to last for all eternity.

Again, after the angels, man is the noblest work of God ; but it is especially through his soul that he is what we know him to be—through that soul which imagines, feels, thinks, reasons, reflects, compares ; through that soul which of all created things is the only one that knows that it exists, the only one that is conscious of its acts, the only one capable of paying free and intelligent homage to its

Creator. And can this soul have no higher destiny than the worm that is trampled under foot? Shall this soul have a shorter existence than its works, than the monuments it raises, than the houses it builds, than the trees it plants? No, reason refuses to admit so poor an end to the possessor of so much greatness.

Is it not, then, astonishing and bitterly to be lamented that even among Christians who are enlightened by the light of faith there are to be found some who would try to persuade themselves that in death man returns to the nothingness from whence he springs, and that his soul is in no way different from that of the brute beast, which simply disappears and utterly vanishes out of existence when it comes to die. To what a height of folly do vice and depraved habits lead—even to desiring to resemble beasts and to end like them, so as to fling themselves without remorse into the mire of sensuality! But vain is their hope; in spite of them, and to their great regret, the soul is immortal, as they will only too bitterly experience in the eternal fires of hell!

Not only does the soul exist for ever, but even the body shall one day rise immortal, even though it shall have crumbled into dust in the grave. Reunited to the soul, it shall by divine virtue resume its previous form, movement and life; and herein precisely consists that resurrection of the body of which express mention is made in the eleventh article of the Creed—a sublime mystery of our faith, yet a mystery highly conformable to reason.

It has been God's will that at all times there should be faith in this mystery. Under the law of nature holy Job proclaimed expressly that at the end of time he should rise in his own flesh and behold the Saviour with his own eyes: *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth . . . and in my flesh I shall see my God.*¹ In the written law we have the testimony of Daniel telling that: *Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach.*² Then we have the seven Machabees who animated each other to martyrdom by the hope of the resurrection to come. Almost countless are the passages in the New Testament in which express mention is made of this truth—a truth so widely accepted even in our Lord's own time, that when to console the sisters of Lazarus He said that their brother would arise from the grave, Martha replied that she did indeed know that he would *rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*³

¹ Job xix. 25, 26.² Dan. xii. 2.³ John xi. 24.

That we should experience no difficulty in accepting this article, God in anticipation has given us manifest proofs of His power by restoring the dead to life on several occasions. Thus, in the Old Testament we read that the prophets Elias and Eliseus restored several to life; and in the New Testament, how many arose from the dead at the simple command of Jesus Christ!—the son of the widow of Naim, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus, and many others not expressly named. And did not the Apostles and other saints renew this prodigy? But while all these thus risen from the dead had to pay tribute to death once again, there is one, Jesus Christ, who rising from the dead can die no more: *Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him*.¹ He has conquered death for ever in Himself, to show us what He could do and what He designed to do one day for us.

Nor is this mystery in conflict with reason—nay, it is even confirmed by reason, considering man's dignity as well as the happiness which God has destined for and promised to him. For it was God Himself who in the beginning fashioned the clay of which Adam was made; and it was God Himself who animated it by His breath, infusing into it a human soul. Was it likely, then, that God would allow the work of His hands, the masterpiece of His power, the depository of His spirit, to perish for ever? Nay, was it not in harmony with His justice and truth that the whole man should be made a sharer in the punishment or recompense merited by his bad deeds or his good, as the case may be?

These considerations, which are clearly founded on reason and faith, leave no room for doubt regarding the article of the resurrection of the dead; but the question now arises, How will this resurrection take place?

St. Paul tells us that it will be accomplished *in the twinkling of an eye*. When the moment fixed by God shall have come, the angelic trumpets shall resound to the four corners of the earth, giving the clear, formal, and unmistakable signal of resurrection to all the dead. And at the call of that voice, which shall be heard in every place—in the depths of the sea, in the very bowels of the earth, in the deepest of graves—every child of Adam shall arise, and there shall be fully verified all that had been prefigured to the prophet Ezechiel when, transported in spirit into a vast plain all covered with dry bones, he saw these bones beginning suddenly to move, the ashes becoming solidified,

¹ Rom. vi. 9.

joint becoming united to joint, rib to rib, and all becoming clothed in flesh, covered with skin, and finally standing up, living and animated.

Yes, they shall arise, these very bodies which we now have. Were they not the same as those dissolved by death it would not be a resurrection but a new creation, which is contrary to the clear teaching of Sacred Scripture : *This corruptible must put on incorruption ; and this mortal must put on immortality.*¹ Each one of us, then, shall resume substantially the same body as before—the same eyes, the same hands, the same limbs—Divine Providence and justice requiring that the same body, which was the soul's instrument in its good or bad deeds, should be reunited to it so as to participate with it in the same rewards or punishments.

But in this respect there is one observation that must not be omitted : Though it is incontestable that to each one shall be restored the body possessed in this life, it must not be imagined that this body will be accompanied by those imperfections or defects which possibly may have rendered it unsightly or deformed here on earth—that is to say, it must not be imagined that one who happens to be blind or lame or disfigured or deformed here on earth will bear these defects in his risen body. No, the resurrection is the work of God ; and as God's works are perfect, He will correct all natural defects by giving to the body that complete integrity which is due to it and which it had received from Him in its first creation.

For the same reason God will repair all defects arising out of old age, and will give back our body, not such as it was in infancy or in old age and decrepitude, but as it was in its prime and perfect maturity of about thirty years, which was the age of Jesus Christ : *Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ.*²

To the imagination the doctrine of the resurrection of the body may appear surrounded by many insuperable difficulties ; but these are mere trifles to the omnipotence of God, before which nothing is impossible. And in any event is it more difficult to imagine the instantaneous resurrection of the body than the creation of the universe ? If God was able to give being to that which was not, how can it be said that He is unable to restore that which already existed ? The vicissitudes of time can indeed alter, transform, corrupt our bodies, but not destroy or annihilate them. Nay, God Himself has told us that he keeps an exact account of all our members, even of the very hairs of the head : *The Lord keepeth all their bones ;*³ and :

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 53.

² Eph. iv. 13.

³ Ps. xxxiii. 21.

*A hair of your head shall not perish.*¹ And if this be so, what difficulty can He experience in collecting our scattered bones and ashes, fitting together all the parts of the body, animating them, and making them flourish forth into a new and immortal life, by restoring to them the spirit which had animated them, and from which they are never more to be separated.

This resurrection will, in substance, be the same for all; but not for all will it have the same qualities—it will differ according to the condition of the soul resuming possession of the body. Some souls shall go into the abodes of bliss, while the rest shall be relegated to the abyss of unending despair.

The bodies of the elect shall be made like the glorious body of our Saviour; as St. Paul tells us: *Our Lord Jesus Christ will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory*; ² and hence the conclusion that they shall have four marvellous properties or endowments—impassibility, brightness, agility, and subtlety.

(1) *Impassibility: It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption*³—which means that this body, now so languid, so changeable, so subject to suffering and disease, shall no longer experience any sort of infirmity, pain, alteration. It will no longer fear thirst or hunger or cold or weariness.

(2) *Brightness: It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory*⁴—which means that these bodies of ours, now so earthly and obscure, shall be luminous and resplendent like the sun. Our Lord Himself has formally attested this: *The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*; ⁵ and in His own sacred person He gave a glimpse of this to His Apostles on the day of the Transfiguration, when He allowed a ray of His Divinity to be diffused over His body—His face becoming radiant as the sun, and His garments white as snow.

(3) *Agility: It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power*⁶—which means that this body, now so gross and unwieldy, shall become so heavenly and light that it can without the least difficulty transport itself in an instant from place to place as if it were no longer a body but a spirit. Of this property also Jesus Christ has given us a sample in His own person after His resurrection, when, in the twinkling of an eye, He appeared to His Apostles, at one time in the supper room, at another on the road to Emaus, and again on the shores of Lake Tiberias.

(4) *Subtlety: It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body*⁷—which means that this body of ours shall be so purified and

¹ Luke xxi. 18.² Phil. iii. 20, 21..³ 1 Cor. xv. 42.⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 43.⁵ Matt. xiii. 43.⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 43.⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 44.

spiritualized that, without ceasing to be a body, it will be able, like the pure spirits, to penetrate the hardest and densest substance. It was thus that our Lord was able to enter the supper room, even though the doors were all closed ; it was thus He was able to pass through the huge stone that barred the entrance to the sepulchre where His body had been laid to rest.

Such, then, are the beatific qualities with which the bodies of the elect shall be endowed. Nor is this all: they shall also be reformed on the model of the glorified body of Jesus Christ, living copies of that wonderful model of all beauty, of all majesty, of all grace and perfection, that is to say, the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ: *He will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory.*¹

Not thus shall it be with the bodies of the reprobate. They too shall resume their natural properties, they too shall find their members intact and destined to live for ever ; but all this will only serve to render them more sensible to the torments of the life to come and to preserve them eternally in the midst of the devouring flames of hell. In all things else they shall possess exactly the opposite qualities to those already described—they shall suffer dreadfully, they shall be motionless, horrible, fearful, changed into monsters and hideous spectres, veritable living corpses. When we say that these bodies shall be animated by souls sprung from the hideous abyss of hell, we have some sort of idea of all the horror which they will impress on the bodies to which they are reunited.

You may hence imagine the different—nay, opposite—sentiments of the elect and of the reprobate when resuming their bodies. What joy, what happiness, what jubilee for the souls of the just to resume a body so graceful, so agile, so luminous, so beautiful, in place of that same body which they had quitted, weakened and consumed by pain, fatigue, and infirmity ! Then shall these two—the soul and the body—tenderly and rapturously embrace ; then shall they bless the few short and fleeting days which they passed together in penance and mortification here below and which have merited such unutterable bliss for them. And, on the other hand, what confusion, what anguish, what rage, shall not the reprobate souls experience at finding themselves compelled to resume so horrible and so revolting a body, become a prey to eternal flames, and constrained to live for ever with such a companion ! They can only cry out against themselves, and curse that body, the instrument and the minister of their sins, which has so ruined and betrayed them. And far more bitter

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

still will be their rage, despair, and fury when on looking round they shall see the glorious and beautiful bodies of the elect, and shall compare the grace and brilliancy of these with the foulness and deformity of that with which their own lot is to be bound up for all eternity.

Such briefly is the explanation of the article regarding the resurrection of the dead, which, as you see, is reduced to two chief points. (1) The certainty of the survival of the soul when the body crumbles to dust in the grave; and (2) the assurance that the soul will one day resume this same body, which will be glorified if we ourselves put no insurmountable obstacle in the way.

This article is one of the most consoling truths of our faith. The natural love we have for life has this effect, that there is nothing more sorrowful and bitter than the thought that the soul must be one day separated from the body and that this body, now become an object of loathing to those near it, must be cast into the grave, become the food of worms, and finally reduced to dust. But if the thought of this inevitable event makes us shudder, what thought can be more consoling, more conformable to our natural attachment to life, than to know that we shall one day resume this mortal body in a state a thousand times more perfect than it is to-day! But it will be impossible to derive true consolation from this thought, if we do not at the same time endeavour to lead a good life. And hence it is that this truth, which is so consoling to the good Christian, is hateful in the eyes of the wicked, who, in their eagerness and anxiety to abandon themselves to their passions, would gladly persuade themselves that there is no life after death. Leading the life of beasts on earth, they would in this respect be glad to have the nature of beasts! Let them have their way—let them cling to their sad, humiliating, hopeless doctrine, if it so pleases them; but as for us, let us be wiser and let us make provision for the brighter lot that lies in store for us.

We, therefore, shall one day resume these bodies which we now have, and we shall appear with them before the throne of God: *In my flesh I shall see my God*; but under what conditions? The answer is ready in the words of St. Paul: *As a man sows, so shall he reap*—he who here moderates its covetous nature, mortifies it, and holds it in subjection to the spirit and to the law of God, cannot fail to rise gloriously: *He that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting*,¹ while, on the contrary, he who devotes all his cares to the

¹ Gal. vi. 8.

satisfaction of his depraved desires and to the body's inordinate appetite for pleasure, luxury and debauchery, can expect nothing but a miserable resurrection: *He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption.*¹ It is now, therefore, that we prepare our future lot, either good or bad. True, it seems far off now. There is a long interval between seed-time and harvest; yet the farmer is careful to sow the seed in the proper season so as to ensure a good crop; yet much time must elapse before he can reap it, and it is exposed to much chance and uncertainty; and shall not we do at least as much when we remember that faith assures us of a safe and abundant harvest? Nay, even did we derive no present advantage from penance and mortification, even did these now bring us nothing but pain, even did the wicked here find no pains in their pleasures and in the satisfaction of their sensual passions, yet there shall come a day, be it sooner or later, when the rôle shall be changed even with regard to the body—the miseries and humiliations of the good shall become an object of envy and admiration, while the seductive beauty and charm that attended the lives of the wicked shall become an object of abomination and horror.

Let us therefore be strong in the faith of the resurrection: let us arm ourselves with this thought so as never to allow ourselves to be conquered by the seductions of the flesh nor by sensual indulgence which is so natural to the heart of man; but always to maintain our bodies, our thoughts and our feelings in holiness and purity, and to persevere unswervingly in Christian mortification. Let us say to our body that if we treat it thus we do so for its eternal good, inasmuch as it must one day be the inseparable companion of the soul and the sharer of its joys or sorrows. Finally, let us be thoroughly convinced that if on the one hand there is an inordinate love of self which is really equivalent to downright hatred, so also there is a salutary hatred of self which is really equivalent to true and lasting love. It is Jesus Christ who thus declares: *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal.*² He that loves his body, cherishing and indulging it in this life, infallibly sacrifices it for all eternity; while, on the other hand, he that hates his body here, holding it under subjection and discipline, guards and preserves it towards the happiness that knows no ending. The alternative is inevitable. Thoughtless, then, and senseless, and even unbelieving beyond all measure, shall we be if in spite of this inevitable prospect we persist in preferring time to eternity, the temporal to the eternal.

¹ Gal. vi. 8.² John xii. 25.

CHAPTER XV

THE TWELFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

THE ROMAN CATECHISM (PART I)

LIFE EVERLASTING

1.—Importance of this Article. THE holy Apostles, our guides, closed and completed the Creed, this summary of our faith, with the article on life everlasting; first, because after the resurrection of the body, the one remaining hope of the faithful is the reward of eternal life; and, secondly, in order that perfect happiness, embracing the fulness of every good, should be ever before our eyes, and should be the end and aim of all our thoughts and desires. The pastor, then, in his instructions to the faithful, will omit no occasion of stirring up their souls with thoughts of the promised rewards of eternal life, in order that they may regard as easy and even pleasant the greatest difficulties they may have to face in the cause of religion, and may yield a more prompt and cheerful obedience to God.

I.—MEANING OF LIFE EVERLASTING

2.—Life everlasting means unending happiness; As many mysteries are concealed under the words here used to denote the happiness reserved for us, they should be explained with such care as to be intelligible to all, as far as each one's capacity will permit.

The faithful, therefore, are to be taught that the words *life everlasting* mean not only perpetuity of existence (with which even the demons and the wicked shall be endowed), but also that perpetuity of bliss which is to satisfy every desire of the blessed. It was in this sense that they were understood by the doctor of the law in the Gospel, when he asked our Lord and Saviour what

he should do *to possess everlasting life*¹—as much as to say: “What am I to do to secure that place where eternal happiness can be enjoyed?” It is in this sense that Holy Writ employs the words, as is clear from several passages.²

3.—And consists
not in earthly
but in heavenly
goods.

The principal reason why the name of life everlasting has been given to the supreme happiness of the blessed, was to banish all danger of imagining that it can consist in corporal and transitory things, which cannot be eternal. The word happiness itself was insufficient to express the meaning intended to be conveyed; especially as there have been some who, puffed up by the idea of a certain empty philosophy, would place the supreme good in objects of sense—things that grow old and perish, whereas happiness is limited by no time. Nay, rather, these earthly things are far removed from true happiness—he is far from true happiness who is captivated by the love and desire of the world. Thus it is written: *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him;*³ and a little further on: *The world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof.*⁴

The pastor, then, will take great care to impress these truths on the minds of the faithful so as to lead them to despise earthly things, and to recognize that happiness is not to be found in this world where we are only sojourners, not permanent citizens. Doubtless, we can be said to be happy here below by hope, if *denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*⁵ But many who seemed wise in their own eyes, not understanding these things, have imagined that happiness was to be found in this life,⁶ and hence they became fools and were overtaken by the most deplorable calamities.

The words *life everlasting* also give us to understand that happiness once attained can never be lost, as some have falsely imagined. True happiness is an accumulation of all good, without any admixture of evil; and if it is completely to satisfy man's desires, it must necessarily be eternal. He who is happy cannot but ardently desire to enjoy for ever those goods which he has attained. Unless that possession, then, is certain and abiding he must necessarily be a prey to the cruel torment of apprehension.

¹ Luke xviii. 18.

³ 1 John ii. 15.

² Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 15; Rom. vi. 23.

⁴ John ii. 17.

⁵ Tit. ii. 12.

⁶ Rom. i. 22.

4.—Eternal happiness cannot be imagined nor described.

The very expression *life everlasting* sufficiently conveys how great is the happiness of the blessed who live in the heavenly home, as well as how incomprehensible it is to all but the blessed.

When to designate a certain object we have to employ a term that is common to several other things, we thereby admit the want of an exact term to express that object in a complete way. If happiness, then, is designated by words which are not more specially applicable to the blessed, than to all that are to live for ever, we may conclude that it is something too high and sublime to be expressed accurately by any proper name. True, indeed, many other terms are used to designate it in Holy Scripture, such as the *Kingdom of God, of Christ, of heaven, Paradise, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. My Father's House*; yet it is clear that not one of these terms is sufficient to express all its greatness.

The pastor therefore will not neglect the opportunity here afforded him of exhorting the faithful to the practice of piety, justice and all the duties of the Christian religion, by holding out before their eyes the many and great rewards signified by the words *life everlasting*.

Amongst the blessings we instinctively desire, life is assuredly to be reckoned as one of the greatest. Now, it is in this blessing above all others that we assert the happiness of the just to consist when we say *life everlasting*. If, then, there is nothing more loved, nothing dearer and sweeter than this short and wretched life—which, subject as it is to so many and various miseries, should more truly be called death—with what attention and earnestness should we not seek after that everlasting life which is beyond the reach of all evils and comprises the perfect and absolute combination of all blessings?

II.—NATURE OF ETERNAL HAPPINESS

5.—The absence of every evil and the possession of every good.

According to the teaching of the Fathers, the happiness of eternal life may be defined as “the exemption from all evils and the possession of all blessings.”

As regards the evils, the words of Holy Writ are clear. Thus in the Apocalypse we read: *They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat*; ¹ and again: *God shall wipe away all*

¹ Apoc. vii. 16.

tears from their eyes ;¹ and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.²

As for the glory of the blessed, it shall be boundless, while their solid joys and pleasures shall be without number. And as we are now incapable of grasping the magnitude of this glory, nor can it possibly enter into our souls, we must enter into it—into the joy of the Lord—so that, immersed therein, we may abundantly satisfy the desires of the soul.

6.—Happiness
essential, and
happiness acci-
dental. Though, as St. Augustine remarks, it seems easier to enumerate the evils from which we shall be exempt than the blessings and pleasures we shall enjoy, yet the pastor should endeavour to set forth briefly and clearly those considerations that are calculated to inflame the faithful with the desire of attaining this supreme happiness.

First of all, however, he must have recourse to that distinction which we have received from the best writers on divine things, when they lay down that there are two classes of blessings—one of which belongs to the very nature of happiness, while the other is only its consequence. For the sake of precision they termed the former essential blessings, the latter accessory or accidental blessings.

7.—The Beatific
Vision. Now, that solid happiness which may be called “essential” consists in seeing God and enjoying the beauty of Him who is the source and principle of all goodness and of all perfection: *This is eternal life* says Christ our Lord: *That they may know Thee, the only, true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent*³—words which St. John seems to develop when he says: *Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God ; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him : because we shall see Him as He is.*⁴ He thus shows that happiness consists in two things—in seeing God as He is in His nature and substance, and in becoming, as it were, gods.

They who enjoy God do indeed retain their own substance, yet at the same time they take on a certain admirable and almost divine form, which makes them seem to be gods rather than men.

¹ Apoc. vii. 17.² Ibid. xxi. 4.³ John xvii. 3.⁴ 1 John iii. 2.

8.—How the blessed put on the nature of God.

Why this transformation takes place is clear from the fact that a thing can be known either from its essence or from its image and appearance. Now, as nothing is really like to God, as there is no image, no resemblance, capable of giving us a perfect knowledge of Him, it follows that no one can behold His nature and essence, unless indeed this Divine essence itself becomes united to us. Such is the meaning of these words of the Apostle: *We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face.*¹ The words *in a dark manner* St. Augustine interprets to mean "in a resemblance capable of making God known to us."² St. Denis also clearly teaches this, when he affirms that things superior cannot be known by the images of things inferior. The essence and substance of what is incorporeal cannot be known through the image of what is corporeal, particularly as images must be less material and more spiritual than the objects they represent, as daily experience shows.

Now, if nothing created can furnish us with an image as pure and spiritual as God, it follows that no image can give us a perfect idea of the divine essence. Along with this, all created things are circumscribed within certain limits of perfection, while God is infinite; and consequently the image of created things cannot reflect His immensity.

There remains, then, but one way of knowing the Divine substance. This is, that the Divine essence should unite itself to us, and in some ineffable manner elevate our understanding, thus enabling us to contemplate the beauty of His nature.

9.—This is accomplished by the light of glory.

This shall be accomplished by the light of glory, when illumined by its splendour we shall see God, the true Light in His own light. For the blessed eternally contemplate God present before them; and being made partakers of the Divine essence by this greatest and most precious of gifts, they enjoy true and solid happiness. We should believe this so firmly as to look forward with sure and certain hope to the day when, through the goodness of God, it is to be ours—a hope thus formulated in the Nicene Creed: "I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

10.—An example of this union.

These truths are so divine, that they cannot be expressed in words, nor even conceived in thought. It is possible, however, to trace some small

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

² *De Trinitate*, lib. xv., c. 9.

resemblance of them in material things. Thus, put iron in the fire, and the fire at once takes hold of it; and though the substance of the iron remains the same as before, yet it seems to be something different, namely, fire. In like manner they who are admitted into the glory of heaven are inflamed by the love of God, and are so affected that, without ceasing to be what they are, they may rightly be said to differ much more from those still living on earth than red-hot iron differs from that which is quite cold.

Briefly, then, that supreme and absolute happiness, which we call essential, consists in the possession of God—and what more can be wanting to the perfect happiness of one who possesses the God of all goodness and all perfection?

II.—Accessory blessings. To this essential happiness are added certain accessory gifts common to all the blessed—gifts less inaccessible to human reason, and consequently more effectually calculated to influence and inflame the heart. Of such sort are those to which the Apostle seems to refer in his letter to the Romans: *Glory, and honour, and peace to everyone that worketh good.*¹ The blessed shall indeed enjoy glory—not alone that glory which constitutes essential happiness, or at least is intimately connected with its nature, but also that glory which consists in the clear and distinct knowledge that each one shall have of the great and exalted dignity of his companions in glory.

And how great must not that honour given them by the Lord be accounted, since they are no longer called the servants but the friends, brethren, and sons of God? Hence our Saviour will address His elect in these most loving and glorious words: *Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you;*² so that we may justly exclaim: *Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable.*³ And along with this they shall be crowned with praise by Christ our Lord in the presence of His heavenly Father and of the Angels.

Besides, if nature has planted in the heart of every man the universal desire of securing the esteem of those who are eminent for their wisdom—and that because the latter are looked upon as the most authoritative judges of merit—how great an increase of glory should we not account it in the blessed that each has for the other the most profound esteem?

¹ Rom. ii. 10.² Matt. xxv. 34.³ Ps. cxxxviii. 17.

12.—The abundances of blessings enjoyed by the Blessed.

Endless would be the enumeration of all the delights with which the glory of the blessed shall be replete. It is impossible even to conceive them in thought. Yet the faithful should be assured of this, that the happy life of the good in heaven is replete with all that can afford joy or even be desired in this life, whether pertaining to the powers of the mind or to the perfection of the body,—only all this, the Apostle affirms, will be accomplished in a more exalted manner than the *eye hath seen, ear heard, or it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive.*¹

Thus the body which was before gross and cumbersome shall in heaven put off mortality, shall be made light and spiritual, and shall no longer stand in need of sustenance ; while the soul shall be satiated with the eternal food of glory, which the Master of that great feast, *passing, shall minister unto all.*²

Who, then, will desire costly garments or royal robes, where there shall be no further use for such things, and where all shall be clothed with immortality and splendour, and crowned with everlasting glory ?

And if on earth the possession of a large and stately house contributes to human happiness, what more stately and more spacious can be conceived than heaven itself, which is illumined throughout with the brightness of God ? Hence the Prophet, contemplating the beauty of this mansion, and burning with the desire of reaching those blessed abodes, exclaims : *How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.*³ And as it should be the pastor's earnest desire that this should be the mind of the faithful, this the common voice of all, so ought he to make it the subject of his constant care and zeal.

13.—All rewards not the same.

*In My Father's house there are many mansions,*⁴ says the Lord ; and in these shall be conferred greater or less rewards according to each one's deserts : *He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly ; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings.*⁵

The pastor, therefore, will not only encourage the faithful to seek this happiness, but he should also frequently admonish them that the sure way of obtaining it is to possess faith and charity,

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

² Luke xii. 37.

³ Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3.

⁴ John xiv. 2.

⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 6.

persevere in prayer and in the salutary use of the sacraments, and discharge all the offices of kindness towards their neighbour. And thus, through the mercy of God, who has prepared the blessing of glory for those that love Him, there shall one day come to pass that which was foretold by the Prophet: *My people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacles of confidence, and in wealthy rest.*¹

¹ Eccius. iii. 27.

² Matt. vii. 2.

THE CATECHISM OF PIUS X

THE TWELFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

Q. What are we taught by the Last Article: "Life Everlasting"?

A. The Last Article of the Creed teaches us that after the present life there is another life, eternally happy for the elect in heaven, or eternally miserable for the damned in hell.

Q. Can we comprehend the bliss of heaven?

A. No, we cannot comprehend the bliss of heaven, because it is beyond the scope of our limited minds, and because the goods of heaven cannot be compared with the goods of this world.

Q. In what does the happiness of the elect consist?

A. The happiness of the elect consists in for ever seeing, loving and possessing God, the source of all good.

Q. In what does the misery of the damned consist?

A. The misery of the damned consists in being for ever deprived of the vision of God and punished with eternal torments in hell.

Q. Are the happiness of heaven and the miseries of hell for the soul alone?

A. The happiness of heaven and the miseries of hell at present affect the soul alone, because at present the soul alone is in heaven or in hell; but after the resurrection of the flesh, man in the fullness of his nature, that is, in body and in soul, will be for ever happy or for ever tormented.

Q. Shall the bliss of paradise and the miseries of hell be the same for all men?

A. The bliss of heaven in the case of the blessed, and the miseries of hell in the case of the damned, will be the same in substance and in eternal duration; but in measure, or degree, they will be greater or less according to the extent of each one's merits or demerits.

Q. What does the word "Amen" signify at the end of the Creed?

A. The word "Amen" at the end of a prayer signifies *so be it*; at the end of the Creed it signifies *so it is*, that is to say, "I believe that all things contained in these twelve Articles are most true, and I am more certain of them than if I had seen them with my eyes."

Forty-fourth Instruction on the Creed

LIFE EVERLASTING—HEAVEN

THE general resurrection of the dead, of which we spoke in our last instruction, will be followed by an immortal life involving the eternal felicity or the eternal misery of the whole man ; such is the truth proposed for our belief in the twelfth article of the Creed, “ Life Everlasting.” In these words we make profession of our belief that after this life there is another life which is to last for ever ; and as this will be verified not only in the case of the elect but also in the case of the reprobate, the twelfth article proclaims the existence of these two different lives, in other words, the existence of a Paradise and of a Hell.

We shall begin with the first, which is generally designated in Sacred Scripture by the term *eternal life* ; whereas that which the damned will be compelled to pass, in the midst of the cruellest torments, deserves the name of *eternal death*.

The possession of Paradise is the greatest blessing we can receive by means of the Church : it is even our last end. It was for this that God the Father thought on us from all eternity ; it was for this that He created us in time ; it was for this that the Son of God came down from heaven, became man, and redeemed us ; it was for this that the Holy Ghost incessantly sanctifies us by His gifts and graces. Thus the end of all the works of the Blessed Trinity, which form the object of the various articles of the Creed, is to lead us to eternal happiness.

This life, which is called Paradise, comprises two things—complete exemption from all evil, and the perfect possession of all good.

I. *Exemption from all evil* is that side of the happiness of the saints which we can better understand, because it is not beyond the capacity of our intellect. We cannot indeed conceive the ineffable blessings which they enjoy ; but the evils from which they are exempt are known to us only too well by daily and sad experience. Who can count all the miseries that attend this wretched life of ours, both in soul and body ? As for the soul, we have the ceaseless struggle

of the flesh against the spirit ; we have passions that tyrannize over us, thoughts that trouble us, desires that torment us, remorse for the past, disgust of the present, solicitude for the future ; weariness, bitterness, agitation. While, as regards the body, we experience toil, fatigue, pain, infirmity, wasting maladies, the anguish of poverty, unforeseen disasters, losses, reverses of fortune, and so on. Miseries on our own part, arising out of our imperfect constitution, physical and moral ; miseries on the part of the world in which we live—the perfidy of relatives, the disloyalty of friends, hypocrisy, jealousy, secret and open persecution, so that we often say that no one is to be trusted, so great is the perversity of the world : *The whole world is seated in wickedness.*¹ In a word, life is a series of evils, contradictions, misfortunes, sufferings, and continual needs which ever attend us and from which we eventually escape only through the greatest of all physical evils, which is that of death.

As for the just—those friends of God and of their own soul, desirous of eternal salvation—who can tell the pain and anxiety caused them by the uncertainty of their fate in the next life, and the dangers to which they are here exposed of offending God and of being for ever separated from Him ? The saints themselves, in spite of the certainty they had of living united to God by grace, were sorely troubled and afraid at the thought of losing Him and of ending badly.

But, God be thanked, the Holy Ghost assures us that all these evils shall be for ever excluded from the happy region of the blessed : *And death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more.*² For all the evils to which we are exposed are in chastisement of sin, and it is on account of sin that they have been introduced into the world ; but as sin will be utterly excluded from heaven, so also shall all pain, all sorrow, all toil and trouble—there shall be nothing to disturb us, nothing to torment us, nothing to molest us—no want, no fear, no desire : *Nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more.* Oh, even if Paradise were nothing more than this, truly would it be an immense blessing ; and yet this is only a small part of what it really is.

II. For besides total exemption from all evils there will be the *perfect possession of all good*. Here, indeed, words fail to tell all this means ; for we have no notion, no idea, of heavenly goods ; and even if we had we could never succeed in speaking of them as they deserve. St. Paul had been rapt in spirit into the third heaven, and yet what

¹ 1 John v. 19.

² Apoc. xxi. 4.

was he able to tell us of it? Simply this: *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.*¹ Could the Apostle better express the grandeur and the excellence of the blessings of heaven? How great and beautiful are some of the things which we have seen and heard since our advent into the world! At the very least, how great and beautiful are the things our mind has imagined! And yet the Apostle tells us that all this is nothing in comparison with the happiness of heaven.

But coming more to detail, in the blessed we may distinguish happiness of body and happiness of soul.

(1) The former consists in four things which constitute the accidental happiness of the saints: the place of their abode, the qualities of their glorified bodies, the companionship of the elect, and finally various pleasures of the body.

(a) *Beauty of abode.*—In the Apocalypse, St. John gives a magnificent picture of the holy city of God—describing how its foundation is made of precious stones; how it has twelve doors, each door being a pearl; how its walls are of jasper stone, its streets and squares of pure transparent gold; how it is intersected by a river of living water, clear as crystal, bordered by ever-green trees; how, finally, a star more brilliant than the sun spreads its rays all round, so that there is always day, serene and resplendent; and so on. Doubtless these things are not to be taken in a material sense; but the description proves that the abode of heaven is something still more beautiful, since to give us some idea of its splendour, majesty, and grandeur, Sacred Scripture borrows images and colours from all that is most beautiful, rich, and magnificent here on earth. Oh, what a happiness to have such an abode for our eternal dwelling-place!

(b) *The sweet companionship*, the loving society, the sincere and affectionate conversation of millions and millions of saints united together by a bond of fraternal love communicating to all the felicity of each one. True, not all shall enjoy the same degree of glory, since their glory will be in proportion to their merits; yet there will be neither jealousy, nor displeasure, nor regret, because the will of all shall be in perfect conformity with that of God. And this explains how it is that those whose glory will be less brilliant will rejoice at the exaltation of others and will give praise and thanks to God for it. Each one will be so happy and content with his lot that he will

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

not even have the least desire to change ; and all will be bound by mutual love so that pleasure, joy, and approbation will render personal to each the happiness of all, as if each one was in the heart of all, and all in the heart of each. Oh, what a happiness to live always in the society of such and to have them as inseparable companions for all eternity !

(c) The *endowments of the glorified body*, which will render it like unto the angels in brilliancy, impassibility, agility, and subtlety. But on this point sufficient has been said in the preceding instruction.

(d) Finally, *the pleasure of the five senses of the body*, all of which will be satisfied and happy in the enjoyment of all that can charm them. Thus the eye will be ravished at the sight of countless marvels, amongst others the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, His holy Mother, and the innumerable legions of the elect. The ear will be charmed with the sweet harmony with which the angels and saints render to God the sensible tribute of benediction and praise. The fragrant odour exhaled by the glorified bodies of the blessed will gladden the sense of smell ; and so on with the other senses which will all have their own pleasures, though of an order purely spiritual and in keeping with the pure and holy felicity of Paradise.

(2) But what are the joys of the body in comparison with those of the soul ? The happiness which we have been discussing is the paradise of the senses, an accidental glory which, though very precious in itself, is incomparably little in contrast with the substantial glory of the soul, which consists in the beatific vision of God. St. Paul, divinely inspired, assures us that our true happiness does not rest on earthly things, and that the kingdom of God consists not in meat and drink, but in joy and love : *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink.*¹ God Himself wills to be our reward and our felicity, and to pour into our breasts that immense plenitude of joy which He experiences essentially and infinitely in Himself : *I am thy reward exceeding great.*² Such, then, is the real substance of Paradise, the true sum total of all blessings—to see God, to love Him, to possess Him, and in some sort to be transformed into Him—all of which will fill the soul with full satiety and perfect content : *I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.*³

First of all, *the vision of God*. As long as we are on earth our eyes can never see Him ; but in heaven, strengthened by the celestial light of glory, they will be fixed on Him, they will contemplate Him

¹ Rom. xiv. 17.

² Gen. xv. 1.

³ Ps. xvi. 15.

face to face, they will recognize and look on Him in person : *In Thy light we shall see light ;*¹ *We shall see Him as He is ; Then face to face.*² Now, what is meant by seeing God face to face ? It means knowing Him as He is in Himself, the unity of essence, the Trinity of persons, the unfathomable abyss of His infinite perfections, the infinite treasures of His wisdom, goodness, omnipotence, holiness. Not only this : but as God contains perfectly in Himself the perfection of all things that have been, are, or will be, even of all possible beings, so in seeing God we shall have complete knowledge of all secrets, even the most mysterious, both in the order of nature and of grace. The mind will be filled with knowledge and light, and our desire to know and understand will be fully satisfied. Nothing will be obscure to us, all will be revealed and known to us. At the first glimpse of God the most ignorant and uninstructed of men will know more than all the philosophers and scientists here on earth put together.

To see God, however, is not only to know Him and in Him to acquire a knowledge of all other things—it is also to love Him. When we come to contemplate Him in Himself, we shall find in Him the supreme, the great, the infinite good, the fullness and source of all good, the essence of all beauty and goodness, in one word, all that man can desire ; and consequently it will be impossible for us not to love Him ardently : of necessity we shall be rapt into ecstasy, and our affections will be concentrated and utterly absorbed in Him. Then shall the heart be inundated with peace and joy : *I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear ;* then shall this irresistible inclination towards happiness be satisfied by the possession of an infinitely lovable object which alone can content our desires.

Finally, to see God and to know Him, is nothing else than to possess Him. For it will be a love of enjoyment, of repose, of intimate union—the blessed will be all immersed in God, and God on His side will communicate Himself completely to the blessed, will make them sharers in His own happiness, and will in some sort transform them into Himself by raising them up to be most like unto His own being : *We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him.*³ Just as a piece of iron cast into a furnace becomes so penetrated by the fire as not to be distinguishable from it, though remaining iron, so the blessed will be so intimately united to God, will be so enveloped, filled, and penetrated by Him, that without ceasing to be creatures they will be transformed into God, will become like to God, and in

¹ Ps. xxxv. 10.² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.³ 1 John iii. 2.

some sort will be but one thing with God—knowing with the wisdom of God, acting with the power of God, reigning with the grandeur of God, living eternally with the life of God: *But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face are transformed into the same image.*¹ What a wondrous transformation is not this!

But what crowns the felicity of the blessed will be the infallible certainty that it is to last for ever. Paradise would cease to be Paradise if there was any fear that it could end. The bare thought would be too cruel—and all the more cruel in proportion as the happiness enjoyed is great. But no such doubt shall ever trouble the elect, since they shall clearly see in God the immutable decree in virtue of which He will eternally preserve the glory He has accorded them. And thus in the transports of their joy they will unceasingly repeat with St. Paul: *And so shall we be always with the Lord.*² We are now content and happy with God; we shall be so for ever; our happiness will never cease, will never be interrupted for a single instant, for ever and ever will remain unchangeably the same: *And so shall we be always with the Lord.*

Nor need we fear that the blessed will experience fatigue or weariness or disgust from being for ever engaged in the one occupation of seeing, loving, and possessing God. All this would be the natural effects of things earthly, but not of the delights of heaven. The blessed, as St. Augustine remarks, will be ever satiated and never satiated. They will be ever satiated because at no time will anything be wanting to the fullness of their happiness; they will be never satiated because the desire of tasting it will be continuous and endless—during all eternity they will ever find new sources of satisfaction in God, and will never experience the least feeling of distaste—while earthly pleasures, which excite our envy before we possess them, only weary and disgust us once we begin to enjoy them!

Such, then, is a brief summary, a feeble outline, of the principal truths which faith proposes for our belief regarding the happiness that God has established as the last end of our being, and as the reward of our good works here on earth. But in this connection it must always be borne in mind that between what has been said or could be said and the actual reality, there is no comparison or resemblance. It is altogether above and beyond anything that we can express or conceive.

Imagine a man blind from his birth. Try as you may to give him an idea of the beauty of the heavens and the earth—of the

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

² 1 Thess. iv. 16.

immensity of the heavens, of the splendour of the sun, of the wondrous number of the stars, of the charming variety of nature, with its mountains, its plains, its valleys, its rivers, its streams, its lakes, its flowers, its trees, its fruits, its animals, its reptiles, beasts, birds, fishes. Could such a one ever form any idea approaching the reality? Assuredly not; and if by a miracle his eyes were suddenly opened to the light, what would not be his surprise and admiration on contemplating the spectacle of the universe, so superior to all he had been able to imagine during the long night of his blindness? Thus will it be with us if we ever have the happiness to reach heaven—profound admiration, sublime ecstasy, will take possession of us at the first sight of the heavenly court, at the first taste of that boundless happiness with which we shall be surrounded and invested, a thousand times above and beyond all our thoughts and expectations.

Judge also of the incomparable happiness of heaven by the end for which God has created us, which is to manifest His glory, magnificence, riches,—and of what is not that all-powerful God capable who has created heaven and earth out of nothing?

Estimate it, too, from the beauty even of this world, which so enchants and ravishes us. And yet it was destined by Him merely as a place of exile, of trial, and test—the habitation and sojourn of His friends, doubtless, but none the less of His enemies and even of the beasts of the field.

Nay, judge of it from the very horror of hell which so moves us with fear as to lead us to criticize the justice of God. And yet, as the Fathers say, God is more liberal in rewarding than severe in punishing. If, then, in the life to come He punishes the wicked so severely, who can comprehend the greatness of the blessings which He has prepared for His faithful servants?

Let us, then, devote all care and attention to the gaining of heaven. True, the desire of Paradise is common to all—but it is equally true that this desire is often ineffectual; and why? Because it is usually a barren desire—a mere wish that costs nothing—and not an efficacious, active, energetic desire, such as that of the saints: a desire which impels us to be active, to surmount all obstacles, to conquer every feeling of repugnance, and faithfully to fulfil all the conditions to which God has attached this reward and recompense.

Of all the reflections inspired by this subject there is one that cannot but deeply impress and move us if we have any feeling in our hearts:—

Each one of us, doubtless, aspires after the glory of Paradise.

Consequently we aspire after the vision, the possession, the enjoyment of God, since it is in this, as we have seen, that Paradise consists : *This is eternal life : That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.*¹ But if we desire to be eternally united with God, why do we live so forgetful of Him now ? why make so little account of Him to-day, and why lightly sacrifice Him to a caprice, a satisfaction, a pleasure, a mere nothing ? why separate ourselves from Him at every instant by sin, and why remain habitually in this state of sin with the utmost indifference ? This God who is to be, and whom we wish to be, for endless ages the object of our happiness—ought He not to be from this forth, during the short span of life, the object of our thought, of our care, of our solicitude, of our love and of our fidelity ?

The answer is obvious. Let us, then, henceforth live in intimate union with God—let us serve Him with love, with sincerity, with constancy, and let us regard as vile and contemptible everything that does not lead to Him. Finally, let us endeavour to the best of our power and without stint to secure this great happiness—and all the more so because of the fact that if we lose it through our own fault, the loss does not end there : we shall of necessity fall into the greatest of all misfortunes, the chastisement of hell, eternal damnation. Such is the reverse of the medal, and how horrible and fearful a reverse it is we shall see in our next instruction.

¹ John xvii. 3.

Forty-fifth Instruction on the Creed

LIFE EVERLASTING—HELL

THE God of goodness who has created us for Himself, and who loves us with the affection of a father, has destined us one and all to the happiness of heaven, if during the brief course of our life here on earth we render Him the service and worship due to Him. But if, instead of serving Him, we offend Him, and if death surprises us while in a state of sin, He who would be our supreme bliss will become the cause of our supreme misery. In this respect there is no third course: he that fails to win heaven can only expect to encounter that most deplorable of all states, eternal damnation—a terrible alternative which ought to impress the mind with the urgent, extreme necessity of reflecting seriously and with fruit on our eternal salvation—on that one thing necessary to which our Lord refers in the Gospel: *There is one thing necessary.*

Having in our last instruction spoken of the happy lot of the just, or of Paradise to which the name of life eternal is justly applied, we now proceed to consider the deplorable lot of the reprobate, that is, of hell, which is rightly called eternal death. What, then, are the truths which faith teaches us with regard to hell?

I. First of all, are we bound to believe that there is any such thing as hell? For us Catholics the question is superfluous; it is a truth as clearly revealed as any other; it is a truth which we must admit if we do not wish to renounce all belief. And though there are some who through affectation or ostentation deride this doctrine as an invention or fable, they forget that in entertaining such a notion they are in open contradiction, not only with faith, but even with that same reason of which they so loudly boast.

To deny hell—that is, to deny the existence of a place of punishment in the next life—is to deny the existence of God. For if we admit the existence of a God—and this all are bound to admit—we must necessarily admit that He cannot but be holy, just, wise, the enemy and avenger of sin. But what of His holiness, His justice, His wisdom, if He allowed sin and wickedness to go unpunished? Now,

we know that for the most part they go unpunished in this world, nay, that they are even crowned with success and prosperity. We must of necessity, then, admit a state of punishment or chastisement in the next world; without this God's government would be inferior to that of men, seeing that the rulers of this world are careful to punish with much rigour the crimes that affect the public weal. Now as all this is utterly repugnant to the idea of a Supreme Being such as God, it is enough to believe in God to believe that there is a hell.

This consideration will suffice for the present to disabuse those who deride the existence of hell; let us now see what the damned souls have to suffer therein.

II. The place called *hell*, which God has prepared for the rebellious angels and for their imitators on earth who die in a state of mortal sin, involves a twofold pain on all who enter it—the pain of sense and the pain of loss, corresponding to the twofold disorder implied in the idea of sin.

For what is it that the Christian does when he sins? He turns his back on that God to whom he should ever remain closely attached by worship, love, and obedience, and instead he turns to creatures, to things of earth, and in them places his end, his gratification, and his happiness, without casting a thought on his Creator. Now, in punishment for rejecting God, God rejects him and abandons him for ever—and this is the pain of loss. While in punishment for having sought his happiness in the miserable objects of this life, God subjects him to the torment of fire, and this is the pain of sense. Both pains are often mentioned in the Gospels, but particularly in that final sentence which Jesus Christ will pronounce against the reprobate: *Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire. Depart*—behold the pain of loss: *into everlasting fire*—behold the pain of sense.

(1) Regarding the nature of the pain of sense, there can be no doubt that in hell there is fire—real fire in the proper sense of the word. Every time that mention is made in Sacred Scripture of the sufferings of the damned, mention is also made of real fire—not of fire in a metaphorical sense. It may indeed be of a different nature from that to which we are accustomed; but this does not mean that it is not real fire: on the contrary, it rather proves that it is much more terrible and active than earthly fire.

For earthly fire is a gift of God's providence and liberality, and is intended by Him to gladden us, to heat us, to give us light, and to be of service to us in the necessities of life; whereas the fire of hell has been created by Him for the sole purpose of punishing His enemies.

Now if earthly fire is so formidable—as we know and see in furnaces, in mines, in foundries, in volcanoes, and especially in lightning—what shall we say of that fire which is simply and solely an instrument of vengeance in the hands of an all-powerful God? No need to be astonished, then, if in itself it comprises qualities that are truly marvellous and surprising. Let us take careful note of these with a view to forming some notion of the greatness of this pain:

(a) This fire, though material, has no need of fuel: it ever subsists, is always preserved without other fuel than the breath of God: *The breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it*; ¹ and thus will it continue for all eternity with the same activity and the same energy as in the beginning, its fury being never suspended or relaxed.

(b) Though material and corporal, it possesses the power of acting immediately on the soul as well as on the body; and hence is called not only fire, but an essence, a spirit, a quintessence of fire. Thus, even now it acts on the souls of the reprobate, though these are still separated from their bodies, and this it will continue to do later on when they shall have resumed their bodies.

How this happens we do not know; but that it does happen there is not the slightest doubt. In any event, something of the kind is not unknown to us here on earth; for if in the present life God makes the soul sensible to all the painful impressions that are produced on the body, can we not imagine that in His omnipotence He will easily be able to find a thousand ways of transmitting to the soul, even while separated from the body, the devouring ardour of the fire of hell? The rebellious angels have no bodies, and yet were they not cast into the devouring flames?

(c) Unlike earthly fire, that of hell burns without destroying or consuming; and this is why our Lord has compared it to salt: *Everyone shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt*.² Just as salt penetrates the flesh on which it is sprinkled, pierces all the fibres, communicates its savour to them, and at the same time preserves them, so the fire of hell will enter, penetrate, pierce everywhere, and while producing the bitterest agony will never cause destruction or death. If Sacred Scripture sometimes speaks of it as a devouring fire, it is only to indicate the avidity and energy with which it acts, not sparing the smallest particle of the reprobate.

(d) The fire of hell comprises in itself every species of torment;

¹ Is. xxx. 33.

² Mark. ix. 48.

and it is principally on this account that hell is called the *place of torments*. As God reunited in the manna, which He rained down on the Jews, all flavours to nourish and fortify His chosen people, so in the fire of hell He has assembled all tortures and all sufferings to punish the reprobate; there will be no chastisement, nor suffering, nor torture, nor convulsion which will not have to be borne in that dread abyss: *Every sorrow shall fall upon them*. To what bitter sorrows is not the body subject here below? what chastisements has not human justice established to punish malefactors? and what tortures has not the cruelty of tyrants invented to torment the martyrs? The bare thought of one of these makes us shudder—and if so what must it be to have to suffer them all together, at one and the same time? *Who knoweth the power of Thy anger, and for Thy fear can number Thy wrath?*¹ Nor is this all: that fire which includes all kinds of torments at the same time excludes every species of relief—it burns, but does not shine; it broils, but does not give light—or rather if it gives any light, it is only that which serves to increase their torments, not that which helps to give relief.

(e) Moreover, all the senses of the body will be tortured—some more and some less, according as they have been abused to a greater or less extent. The sins of sight will be punished by dense darkness, by horrible spectres of hideous demons, by cruelly irritating smoke. Sins of hearing will be punished by the cries and howlings with which that prison will incessantly resound. Sins of taste will be punished by a devouring thirst, which can never be appeased—not even by so much as a drop of water; and so on with the other senses.

(f) Finally, the fire of hell will have another special quality: it will, so to say, be endowed with reason and understanding—a subtle investigator capable of distinguishing shades of guilt and of meting out punishment to each one in proportion to the offence, reserving the cruellest pains for the greater crimes and the more unpardonable faults. Now, Christians are indelibly marked with the sacred character of baptism, and hence, if damned, they cannot hope to escape recognition; amidst the infinite multitude of Mohammedans, Jews, and idolaters, the fire of hell will find them out and mark them by its most rigorous severity. Then, indeed, will those have good reason to know how much they are deceived who pretend that it is the same to be damned for a thousand sins as for one. Thus if a man is damned for two mortal sins, his punishment will be double that of a man

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 11.

damned for one alone—and it will be redoubled three times, ten times, a hundred times, according to the number of the sins for which he has been damned.

Nay, not only will the punishment vary according to the individual ; but even in the same body there will be special tortures for the limbs and organs which have in a more special way contributed to sin ; such, for instance, as the heart of the passionate man, of the miser, and of the envious ; the tongue of the evil speaker, the perjurer, and the blasphemer ; the palate of the glutton and the drunkard ; the touch and the eyes of the impure and the sensual ; and so on.

With these considerations before our minds we shall have little difficulty in forming some idea of the extent of the punishment inflicted by an angry God on the unhappy denizens of hell.

(2) And yet while the pain of sense, which we have been hitherto describing, impresses the imagination more deeply, because the more sensible, it is far from being the greatest of the pains of the damned. The greatest pain, an inconceivable pain, but a pain in keeping with infinite justice, is that which is called the pain of loss, and which consists in the privation of God. The sinner turns his back on God at a time when he should serve Him ; and God will turn His back on the sinner in that hour when otherwise the latter should enter into the enjoyment of his Creator. Yet this consideration does not as a rule move men so deeply as the thought of the fire of hell already described ; now why is this ? Simply because we have through the senses an experimental knowledge of the power and effects of fire, while of God we have only an abstract idea, and even that is impeded by the body and by the thousand visible objects surrounding us, alluring us, distracting us, dulling our perception. This, too, is why little account is taken here below of the loss of God and of His grace ; it is also the reason why even when they have lost that grace people go on leading a careless, free-and-easy life, devoid of anxiety, as if nothing wrong had taken place.

But, oh, how different will it be in the other life, when the world and the illusions of the senses shall have passed away ! Escaped from the prison of the body, the soul stands isolated, naked, separated from all the various objects that occupied it here on earth ; it is submitted to the rays of God's countenance, inundated by an ineffable light which instantly gives it a clear and penetrating knowledge of that supreme and infinite good, which is God ; and hence it concentrates itself in Him alone, and feels itself impetuously carried towards Him by the instinct and force of nature. But when it finds itself

rejected by Him as an enemy, cast off from Him and accursed for ever, who can express its grief, pain, despair? The most heart-rending scenes of rejection, parting, separation that can be imagined here on earth are only feeble images of the profound and irremediable grief that afflicts the soul on being banished from God and precipitated into the horrors of hell.

There is, however, a difference—the grief which we experience here below at the loss of one who is dear to us, softens with time, and eventually vanishes or is forgotten; whereas the grief produced in the reprobate by the loss of God remains ever the same as it was at the first moment of damnation; and it will incessantly torment him through the operation of two violent feelings of a perfectly opposite nature—*desire* and *hate*. *Desire*, because he can never cease to regard God as his supreme good nor ever cease to be conscious that He is infinitely amiable; and *hate*, because incessantly finding himself the object of God's vengeance, he cannot but regard Him as a persecutor and an enemy. And yet, though hating Him he cannot help desiring Him, and though desiring Him he cannot help hating Him—aversion ever struggling with desire, desire ever struggling with aversion! Oh, the horrid torture of a soul perpetually torn and divided by feelings so keen and so contradictory!

Hence, that other spiritual pain which our Lord calls the worm of conscience: *Their worm dieth not*,¹ and which consists in the indelibly painful memory of having irremediably lost God—man's last end—of having lost Him for so little, and simply and solely through one's own fault. This thought, which will be ever present, will be as the gnawing of a worm, continually tormenting all the powers of the soul.

And first of all the *memory*—the reprobate can never forget the sins committed for trivial reasons that have long vanished; the enterprises imprudently undertaken; the occasions neglected of doing good and of returning to the right path; the propitious and favourable moments lost for ever without hope of return.

Then the *intellect*—ever thinking on the greatness of the happiness for which God has created man; ever conscious of the little it would have cost to gain that happiness, and how much it really cost to be damned; and ever comparing the fatal exchange that has been made of eternal misery for eternal bliss.

And then the *will*—as a sea lashed by the tempest, the will is

¹ Mark ix. 43.

beaten by the most furious feelings—remorse, sadness, indignation, rage, spite, despair, fury—to such an extent that the reprobate will lacerate their bodies and curse the day of their birth, their parents, the saints, and even God Himself. What a fearful abyss is not that hell which excludes all that is good and unites in itself every evil that can be imagined?

In our next instruction we shall devote attention to a few questions connected with this subject, such as the eternity of hell and the justice of the punishments which God metes out to the reprobate. Meanwhile, in conclusion, let us look well to our eternal interests: *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*¹ Let us ponder well whether for the sake of a few momentary pleasures, mere things of nothing, it is worth while to expose ourselves to the arrows of God's avenging justice. Let us beseech God to enlighten us, to fill us with holy and salutary fear, so that we may avoid in time and at all costs so fearful a misfortune: *Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear.*²

¹ Heb. x. 31.

² Ps. cxviii 120.

Forty-sixth Instruction on the Creed

THE PAINS OF HELL, ETERNAL AND JUST

OF all that may be said in connexion with the sufferings of the reprobate in hell, there is nothing so calculated to inspire salutary fear as the thought of their eternal duration. Accordingly, in the present instruction we shall first see what is meant by this eternity, and then we shall dwell on the truth and justice of eternal punishment.

I. And first, what is meant by the eternity of hell? Can we really embrace it in thought? No. Eternity is an inconceivable mystery, incomprehensible like God Himself. We say that eternity is a time to come which will have no end, because after the lapse of as many years as you will there still remains a longer period, and after this a period longer still, and so on, period after period, without ever arriving at a moment that can be called the last. This is all we know—this is what we say; but, strictly speaking, we cannot conceive it, because our intellect, which is limited, becomes confused and lost when it attempts to contemplate the infinite which it cannot grasp.

When we look out on a space so extended that the eye cannot reach the end of it—for instance, a long straight road or the vast immensity of the ocean—it seems to us that at a certain point the road ends, the sea terminates, whereas in reality both extend much beyond that point, because the eye is unable to follow beyond a certain distance. It is the same when we try to think on eternity—as we cannot comprehend it because of our mental limitations we assign it boundaries and limits, whereas eternity knows neither the one nor the other.

No image, no measure, no comparison, then, can give us a just idea of eternity. Can we conceive a greater duration than a continuous series of thousands and millions of years, of thousands and millions of centuries? Can we imagine a number more unlimited than that of the leaves of the trees, the grains of sand on the shore, the drops of water in the ocean, the stars in the firmament? Here we have a succession, a quantity, a number, defying all calculation.

One would say that here there is no end; and yet an end there is—the centuries will roll by until one day this incalculable number will be exhausted; whereas eternity will remain just as it was in the beginning. The reason is that while all other things can be counted, and hence are not infinite, eternity has no end, and hence can neither be increased nor diminished. Add year to year and century to century—make all the calculations you will—and we are still at the beginning—eternity still remains immutably the same, without being increased or diminished by as much as one moment.

Now, according to the repeated, clear and incontestable oracles of Sacred Scripture, this eternity which our intellect is unable to measure must be passed by the reprobate in the dreadful abyss of its sufferings. Possibly there is no truth that has been revealed in more precise terms. *These shall go into everlasting punishment—but the just, into life everlasting*¹—as the happiness of the elect will be eternal, eternal too will be the misery of the wicked. Hell would cease to be hell if in the midst of its pains the reprobate could have as much as a single ray of hope that a day would come when they should have an end. But no, says St. Paul, *they shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction*. Who will hesitate to acknowledge that of all the pains of the damned this is the greatest, the cruellest, the very hell of hells? Pleasures, pastimes, prolonged beyond measure become insupportable, become a veritable martyrdom; and if this be so, what must it be to suffer atrocious torments that can never have an end? Nineteen hundred years have rolled by since Judas entered hell for the first time; Cain has been there for more than two hundred generations; and yet how much of their sufferings are over, and how much remain to be paid? Oh, vainest of vain questions—such terms can indeed be applied to time, but not to eternity—eternity, says St. Augustine, knows no when. *Where the tree falls there shall it lie.*² —*They shall seek death and shall not find it; they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.*³

Oh, what an abyss, what a fearful mystery, is not this eternity! Interminable in the duration of torments that are always at their beginning and never at an end; invariable in the persistence of torments that remain ever the same; indivisible in the continuity of torments that are ever combined and never separated! Who can comprehend it? Incomprehensible to us, it will be understood only too well by him who has the misfortune to know it by bitter experience.

¹ Matt. xxiv. 46.² Eccles. xi. 3.³ Apoc. ix. 6.

II. There is just one thing that seems more incomprehensible still, and it is the conduct of many Christians in the presence of this great truth. To believe by faith in an eternity of torments and to live as only too many live—is not this a still greater mystery than the duration of hell? It must be said that either they do not believe in it at all or that, if they do, they never reflect on it. And this leads us to the fact that there are many who either deny this truth altogether, or entertain doubts with regard to it, or at the very least do all in their power to banish the thought of it from their minds.

(1) And first as regards those who deride the idea of such a place as an eternal hell; what are the grounds on which they base their incredulity?

They assert that an eternity of suffering is too severe and is incompatible with God's goodness and justice—such a belief, they repeat over and over again, is utterly repugnant and injurious to the idea which we ought to have of God. There is no class of persons so ready to exalt and magnify the goodness of the Lord as these; but unfortunately their object is clear—it is, that they may live undisturbed by anxiety or remorse. Let them but reflect with St. Augustine that a punishment decreed by a God who is goodness and justice itself cannot be excessive. Moreover, Sacred Scripture which teaches that God is infinitely good and just, teaches also that He will make the reprobate suffer for all eternity; and Sacred Scripture can no more err on the one point than on the other; consequently an eternal punishment is quite compatible with the divine attributes. Such is the way a faithful Christian should reason, and it is assuredly the easiest way to cut short all doubts—the eternity of the pains of hell should not be set up in opposition to the justice and goodness of God, but rather from both combined one should conclude how great an evil must be that sin which is punished during all eternity by a God who is infinitely good and infinitely just.

“But,” they insist, “does not justice require that the punishment be in proportion to the offence, and where is the proportion between the fault of a moment and an eternity of torments?”

In reply to this it should be observed in the first place that those who make this objection are very well aware that a deed or consent that is gravely culpable, even though momentary, is menaced by God with eternal punishment; and hence it is lawful to ask in return, why then do they freely and willingly choose that fatal instant to ruin themselves for ever!

In the second place, who has told them that the length of the

punishment should be measured by the length of time employed in committing the offence? Even human justice does not observe any such measure. Theft, assault, murder, are committed in a moment, and yet they are punished by years of prison, by penal servitude for life, and even by death, which in a certain sense is an eternal punishment, inasmuch as the individual is removed for ever from the society of the living. If, then, the shortness of the time in which sin is committed is not to be taken into account in determining the length of the punishment meted out to it, other reasons and circumstances have to be considered;—

First and foremost, it should be remembered that the time assigned by God for repentance is during the present life, after which there can be no penance, and consequently no means of effacing sin. The sin will lie eternally upon the soul of the sinner who passes to the next life without having done penance in this; the hatred of God will be as eternal as the sin; and so too will the punishment.

This, however, must not make us overlook another still more solid and conclusive reason founded on the intrinsic gravity of sin. For in itself sin contains a certain infinity of malice with respect to its object, which is God. The offence done to God by sin is infinite, and hence merits infinite punishment; and since this punishment cannot be infinite in intensity, it must at least be infinite in duration.

True, we are unwilling to recognize the infinite malice of our offences, and we are inclined to look on such language as exaggerated. But do we fully recognize who is this God whom we offend?—the sovereign majesty whom we despise, trample on and provoke by our rebellion; the revolting opposition of our will against His; the impudent contempt of His law; the rash neglect of His judgments; and the insensate pride, nay, the strange and inconceivable folly, of an abject miserable creature daring to rise up in rebellion against God—all of which circumstances are involved in the very idea of sin!

In this respect let us not rely on our own judgment, but on that of God. Is it not true that to cancel sin and to merit the pardon of it He exacted infinite satisfaction from His divine Son? Here we have the exact measure and the just weight which must be used in this matter. As often, then, as we look on and contemplate the sorrowful image of a God crucified and dying for us, let us see therein, written in letters of blood, and blood divine, the malice and gravity of sin; and, on the other hand, let us recognize in the sinner the revolting abuse of infinite goodness and of infinite love which has redeemed him at so great a price. At such a sight as this, can one be any longer astonished

at the eternity of the pains of hell, which weigh but little in the balance against the life and death of a God? What wonder that the punishment of sin is to be eternal in the next life, if to expiate it there was necessary here on earth the infinite satisfaction of a God, a satisfaction so often rendered vain through man's own fault?

Still, one may urge, the difficulty remains—how can a good and loving God bear to see His creatures in suffering for all eternity? In return we may well ask, How was He able to bear the sufferings of His only Son, whose life was worth infinitely more than that of all created things put together? To spare us He did not spare Him,—He exacted from Him in all their rigour the pains that we had deserved. Now, if our faults nullify this great excess of love, justly do they draw down eternal punishment on our heads.

Hence, instead of accusing God and censuring the severity of His chastisements, let us rather learn therefrom to recognize the gravity of sin—that sin which seems so little in our eyes and which we are always trying to undervalue, looking on it as levity and frailty, and estimating it according to the desires of our own heart, and not according to the judgments of God.

Let us recognize that if the mercies of the Lord are truly divine, His justice is equally so. True, it prepares an eternal penalty for our misdeeds; but has it not also prepared an eternal reward for our good works? Why, then, do we voluntarily renounce the eternal reward, preferring the eternal punishment? If we are threatened by God with eternal punishment for a single moment's guilty pleasure, are we not on the other hand, promised an eternal reward for an instant of sincere repentance? Why, then, prefer the former to the latter? A simple *remember* uttered with faith and contrition by the good thief won for him the reward of being at once and for ever associated in the glory of Jesus Christ in Paradise.

In a word, no one goes to hell who has not freely chosen to go there. God never ceases to warn us of this as long as we live,—He warns us as a father that He may not have to punish us as a judge. If an eternity of punishment does not suffice to arrest our wickedness and to detach us from evil and from the many deeds of sin and crime that are committed daily—theft, rapine, impurity, fornication, adultery, murder, betrayal, and injustice of every kind—what would become of the world if He had decreed a lesser penalty? What impression is made on us by the pains of purgatory? Terrible as they are, they are not eternal, and for this very reason are not feared. And how can we say that an eternal punishment is too severe, when it does not

suffice to keep us to the path of duty? The damned in hell blame themselves alone, not God. Their conscience urges them and constrains them to confess and proclaim His irreproachable justice; and such forced confession and approbation is assuredly not the least of their torments.

Such, then, are the reflections that should be borne in mind by those who refuse to accept this article; and in refusing to be convinced they must at least admit that they are guilty of palpable imprudence. Where are the clear, conclusive reasons removing all fear from their minds? At the very utmost all that one can do is to doubt whether there is such a place as hell, and to conclude: Perhaps there is, perhaps there is not. Now, how can one rely on a mere *perhaps* in a decision of such grave importance?

Reason itself, no less than our own interests, counsels us when in doubt to choose the safest part, as we usually do in matters of less importance. If belief in hell leads us to live a good life, what loss would we be at even if it turned out that there was no hell? At the most we would have lost a few pleasures, a few moments of satisfaction, which are not even worthy of a sensible man and are followed by remorse and bitterness. If, on the contrary, by refusing to believe in hell we were to live a bad life, and if it turned out that hell really existed, would we not simply be precipitating ourselves hopelessly into an abyss of unbearable, unending misfortunes? Acting in such a way, then, we openly declare ourselves to be not only unbelievers, but imprudent and senseless men!

III. So much for the unbelieving and doubting. Now, what of those who, though professing to believe in the eternity of hell, yet live in a habitual state of sin, without ever casting a thought on the future? God gives the answer—to such thoughtlessness and want of reflection He attributes the torrent of disorders, crime and wickedness with which the world is inundated: *With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart.*¹ Thoughtless, heedless souls like these should often remember the eternal pains of hell, because there is no thought more calculated to withdraw them from evil and keep them faithfully on the right path: *Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin,*² says the Holy Ghost; while our Lord Jesus Christ was specially emphatic on this point: *Fear him that can destroy both body and soul into hell.*³

Indeed, if one only reflects on it, how is it possible for a man to

¹ Jer. xii. 11.

² Eccl. vii. 40.

³ Matt. x. 28.

remain tranquil in a state of mortal sin ? If he dies in that state, he is lost for ever—and as long as he remains in that state he is standing on the brink of an abyss, supported by a single thread—his life. But his life is always dependent on God, that God who actually detests him because he is converted into an enemy by sin. And if God cuts that thread, if He allows him to fall, woe betide him ! All is over, all hope at an end !

Let us suppose, as not unfrequently happens, that in the dead of the night you are roused by the cry of fire, and on glancing out you find your house enveloped in flames. Your first thought is on your money, your property, and how to save it. But you at once see that if you delay for as much as a moment in escaping you will be suffocated by the smoke, burned by the flames, and buried under the ruins of your house. At this sight, much as you may love your property, you abandon it, so as to escape and save your life—so strong is the love of life and the fear of losing it.

Oh ! if serious reflection, inspired by living faith, would but open your eyes to the risk you run of becoming the victim not merely of a temporal but of an eternal fire—of losing not merely the life of the body, which in any event must one day or another come to an end, but the life of the soul, which is to last for ever—you would not hesitate much in flying sin and all the occasions of sin, and in leading a regular and Christian life ! The first advantage, then, of such reflection is to abandon sin without hesitation or delay, and to abandon it at all costs. Another advantage is that this reflection puts you on your guard for the future and strengthens you against falling any more. All that is required to fall again is a single mortal sin ; and such sin, which is so easily committed, might be your last and might involve your eternal damnation. Therefore exercise vigilance over yourself, a careful shunning of danger, an avoidance of all sin, a firm resistance to temptation, a prompt recourse to God, fervent prayer—in a word, perseverance in the right path, with no swerving therefrom.

If, then, we have our salvation at heart, let us never lose sight of this reflection, and let us at once begin to attend seriously to those things which alone decide our real happiness or our real misery, and decide it irrevocably and eternally. In all the world, asks our Lord, is there anything that can compensate for the loss of our soul ? *What exchange shall a man give for his soul ?*¹

¹ Matt xvi 26.

Such, then, is the explanation of the article concerning life everlasting. It is, as we have seen, divided into branches infinitely apart—an eternity of bliss in heaven, and an eternity of woe in hell. Which of the two shall be ours? That for which we are striving at the present moment.

It must be one or the other; hence the necessity of the most serious reflection.

It can be the miserable lot of the reprobate; therefore let us fear, tremble, and be on our guard.

But by the grace of God the lot of the elect depends on ourselves; therefore let us do our all to secure it.

All other things that occupy us here below are the merest trifles, the merest toys, in comparison with eternity, which alone is important—the *one thing necessary*, as our Lord has so emphatically warned us. Let us take this maxim well to heart here and now, so as to avoid having to meditate on it long and vainly for eternal years of horrible, irremediable despair.

Forty-seventh Instruction on the Creed

ON PURGATORY

IN a former instruction we saw that the moment the soul leaves the body it has to appear before the judgment seat of God to render an account of its stewardship and to hear the sentence that is to decide its lot for all eternity : *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.*¹

If at death the soul be in a state of mortal sin it is lost for ever more, at once it is banished to hell. For that soul no hope may spring in any human breast, for that soul no prayer may go before the throne of God.

But if at death no mortal sin stains the soul, the Catholic Church tells us that there and then it is awarded the prize of an immortal crown to be worn for all eternity in the mansions of the blessed.

Some souls, she tells us, enter at once into possession of that crown, and they are those that are stained by no stain, that are in complete and perfect friendship with God, and hence have no debt to wipe out, no atonement to make, in the world beyond the grave.

But there are other souls, she furthermore tells us, that do not at once enter into possession of the crown of happiness that is finally to be given them. The prize is awarded, but there can be no enjoyment of it until the soul has fully satisfied divine justice, expiated its faults, and paid the last farthing in a place of temporary suffering, known as Purgatory.

And first as to the existence of Purgatory : We know that into the unveiled presence of God nothing defiled can enter ; we know that few can hope to pass stainless through a world where even the just man falls seven times a day ; we know that while mortal sin is forgiven as far as the eternal punishment due to it is concerned, there may yet remain a debt of lesser punishment to be borne ; we know that while this debt of temporary punishment may be paid in this life before the hour of death, yet we also know that a man may pass out of this world

¹ Heb. ix. 27.

without having blotted out that debt by complete penance and satisfaction.

What, then, becomes of these two classes of souls?—those stained with sins not mortal, and those loaded with a debt of temporary punishment yet unpaid? What is to become of them when they have quitted the prison of the body? Shall they at once enter into the glorious presence of God? No, because they are still defiled—they are not pure enough to stand in His presence. Shall they be sent into the everlasting punishment of hell? Again no, because God is faithful to His word, and to mortal sin alone has He attached the penalty of hell. Where, then, do they go? Into an intermediate place or state which is neither hell nor heaven, where they are detained till God has exacted full satisfaction, till they have paid the last farthing.

Of the existence of some such place in the next life there can be no doubt. Apart from the fact that the Catholic Church, which, as we have seen, is infallible, clearly proclaims that there is such a place we have abundant evidence of it in Sacred Scripture and in the constant belief and practice of the Church of all ages.

As regards Sacred Scripture, it will be enough to turn to the twelfth chapter of the second Book of the Machabees, wherein it is related how the Jews, having defeated and slain the opposing armies, came to bury their companions who had fallen in the combat; how they then discovered that some of these had been guilty of certain acts which were forbidden by law; how the survivors prayed the Lord and besought Him that the sin might be forgiven; how they made a collection and sent it to the temple to have sacrifice offered for the sins of the dead; and how they did this because they believed that *it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins*. Now in this account it will be observed that the Jews of that day believed that some of those who had died in holiness were not free from every stain of sin, and that such souls could be liberated by the prayers and other good works of the living. The Jews of that day, then—that is to say, God's chosen people—believed in the existence of an intermediate state where certain faults and debts had to be expiated, and where souls that had even died in holiness were to be loosed from their sins.

This event occurred about two hundred years before our Lord came on earth; it was publicly recorded, and was well known to have been practised by the Jews. Now we know that when any practice contrary to the law of God had been introduced among the Jews our

Lord took care to exclaim against it and condemn it. Did He do so in this case ? There is not the slightest reason to think so ; and hence we must conclude that the Teacher of all truth approved of the doctrine that *it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.*

Possibly there is no point on which the practical belief of the faithful in all ages has been so constant and so universal. Interrogate the centuries, one after another ; examine prayer-manuals and missals ; compare them with each other and with the writings of the great fathers of the Church ; the result is always the same—you will everywhere find prayers, supplications, alms, sacrifices, offered on behalf of a certain class of souls not guilty enough to incur the penalty of eternal damnation, and not pure enough to enter into the immediate enjoyment of eternal happiness. One of the greatest writers of the third century recommends a widow to pray for her departed husband on the anniversary of his death. Another great writer, one of the most learned of his age, lays down clearly the belief that if at the hour of death there is found in us a mixture of good and bad, we shall not be rewarded for the good without the bad being taken into account, nor punished for the bad without the good being taken into consideration. A little later, St. Cyprian points out to the faithful how fearful it is to be deprived after death of the suffrages of the Church. St. Ephrem, dying, thinks less of asking perfumes for his body than prayers to liberate his soul. And so on down through the ages from century to century, until finally the Council of Trent solemnly defined “ that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are aided by the suffrages of the faithful, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.”

And what exactly is the condition of the souls detained therein ? what have they to suffer ? On this point God has not spoken, neither has the Church defined. All that is certain is that they do suffer. Their situation is, so to say, forced and unnatural—first because they are where they would not be, and secondly because they are not where they would be ; while they are fully conscious that their actual condition is due to their own fault and to that alone.

Is that suffering very severe ? All that is certain is that they suffer intensely. But is their suffering greater than the greatest sufferings of the present life ? The highest authorities hold that it is.

Is expiation to be made by fire ? The Church has not said so but the general belief is that in Purgatory there is the torment of fire ; that this fire is material, not merely metaphorical ; and that it

differs from the fire of hell, not in its nature but in its effects. For example, under the action of fire gold brightens, while straw smokes; so under the action of a similar fire the damned are inexorably punished while the just are mercifully purified. At the same time we should be cautious in accepting the assertions of those who lay down that Purgatory differs from hell in the duration, not in the intensity, of its pains. True, the pains of Purgatory must be severe, insupportable; but they are not the outcome of God's hatred, as are those of hell, but of His love, and hence must be different in many respects from those of hell.

It should be noted that various descriptions of Purgatory that are sometimes met with—such as chains, scourges, racks, and other instruments of torture—are not to be taken literally. At most they are comparisons intended to convey some idea of the sufferings of Purgatory; but they are nothing more than comparisons. Such instruments of suffering and torture cannot apply to the souls in Purgatory, for the simple reason—that these souls are purely spiritual and are actually separated from their bodies, which alone could be affected by sufferings of the kind. In one word, all we know of the sufferings of Purgatory is that they are intense.

And how long have these sufferings to be borne? On this point nothing has been revealed. All that can be said is that some souls go straight to heaven the moment they quit the body; that others will merely pass through Purgatory; and that others will be detained therein for months, or years, or decades, or even centuries.

Can they do anything to shorten the time of their Purgatory? No, they cannot do anything for themselves; they can, indeed, pray for us, because even though they are in Purgatory they do not cease to be souls dear to God. But as for shortening the time of their imprisonment all they can do is to suffer patiently the punishment allotted them by the justice of God.

Can this term, then, be in no way shortened? Has God left them without means of relief? Here the Catholic Church speaks out plainly and tells us that the souls detained in Purgatory are "aided by the suffrages of the faithful, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar." This truth is based on another truth already explained, that is, the Communion of Saints. We are all members of the one body, which is Jesus Christ; and as one member of the human body can make up, to some extent at least, for the powerlessness and deficiency of the other, so the living members of Christ's body on earth can merit for those who are powerless in Purgatory. God,

then, will not help them Himself ; they cannot themselves do anything to shorten the term of their Purgatory ; but He has not left them without resource—He has placed it in our power to help them—we “ who were their friends and fellows here on earth, who loved them and whom they loved, who stood by tearful and saw them die, who knelt above their fresh-made grave and almost swore in the bitterness of our sorrow that we should never forget them.”

And how do we keep our promise ? “ Our sorrow for the dead is keen, but, oh ! it is not lasting. Memory’s magic pictures grow fainter every day. There may have been a time when we knelt distracted by the death-bed, and deemed that because of the bereavement we were about to suffer earth could never be bright for us again. And then in the first burst of sorrow, memory was so keen that its keenness was a pain. We seemed for some time to see the face of the dead and to hear the voice that was gone silent. But it does not last—we go out into the world, and the world supplies us with new thoughts, and the dead friend is remembered but faintly, and soon is utterly forgotten.”

Let us not forget, then, that the souls in Purgatory cannot relieve themselves, can perform no meritorious act for themselves, nor have recourse to the sacraments, nor gain an indulgence. Let us sometimes bring to mind that the souls of our relatives and friends may still be suffering in Purgatory ; and let us remember from time to time that in Purgatory there are souls who have no one to pray for them or for whom no one prays.

In his *Confessions* St. Augustine dwells lovingly on the virtues of his mother, St. Monica, and on all he owed her ; and, in particular, he recounts the part she had in his conversion—how she had followed him in his wanderings, had patiently borne with his failings, had wept over the evil courses of his wild life, had unceasingly besought the Lord to change his heart and his ways, until her tears and prayers were rewarded and she saw her son a faithful servant of the Most High. This accomplished, her work was done : “ Nothing now remains to attach me to earth,” she told him. “ There is nothing that I know to keep me here any longer—nothing more for me to do. One thing alone made me desire to stay a little longer on earth, and this was that I might see you a Christian and a Catholic before I died.” A few days later as they were returning from Italy to their native land she fell ill at Ostia, where the yellow waters of the Tiber are swallowed up in the sunny blue of the Mediterranean. “ Here,” she said, “ you shall bury your mother. Be not concerned about this body of mine—lay

it to rest anywhere. One thing only do I ask of you, and it is that wherever you may be you will remember me at the altar of the Lord." In after years St. Augustine tells how a few days later he closed her eyes in death, and how he mourned over her, remembering all she had done for him, how holy had been her life, and how happy her death. "When she saw that the day of her death was at hand," he narrates, "no thought troubled her as to how her body was to be treated, neither did she desire to have it embalmed and brought back to her native land and a fine monument erected over it. None of these things did she direct—her one request was to remember her at the altar which she had unfailingly attended during life, and whence she well knew was dispensed that holy Victim: *Blotting out the hand writing of the decree that was against us.*¹

END OF VOLUME I.

¹Col. ii. 14.

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